

Sam^r Barnes 1792

PEACE AND UNION RECOMMENDED;

AND

4486.4.56

SELF disclaim'd, and CHRIST exalted :

IN

TWO SERMONS,

Preached at

PHILADELPHIA,

Before the Reverend SYNODS of New-York and
PHILADELPHIA :

The FIRST, on the 24th of MAY, 1758,

BY FRANCIS ALISON, D. D. *K*

VICE-PROVOST of the COLLEGE, and RECTOR of the
ACADEMY, in PHILADELPHIA.

And, The SECOND, MAY 25, 1758,

BY DAVID BOSTWICK, A. M.

MINISTER of the PRESBYTERIAN-CHURCH, in
New-York.

Both publish'd at the joint Request of the Reverend SYNODS.

PHILADELPHIA :

Printed by W. DUNLAP, at the Newest-Printing-Office,
MDCCLVIII.

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SENT DISSEMINATED, and Christ exalted:

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PHILADELPHIA,

From the Reverend of New-York and



The First, of May, 1753.

BY FRANCIS ALLISON, D. D.

Professor of the College, and Rector of the

Academy in Philadelphia.

And, The Second, May 22, 1753.

BY DAVID BOSTWICK, A. M.

Minister of the Presbyterian Church, in

New-York.

Each sermon is the joint work of the Reverend SYNOD.

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PEACE and UNION recommended : A

S E R M O N,

Preached before the Reverend SYNOD of PHILADELPHIA,

AND THE

Reverend COMMISSION of the SYNOD of NEW-YORK,

At PHILADELPHIA, MAY the 24th, 1758.

BY FRANCIS ALISON, D. D.

Vice-Provost of the College, and Rector of the Academy,
in PHILADELPHIA.

Be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Peace shall be with you.

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

----- Pacem te Poscimus Omnes.

Blessed are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children
of God.

Matth. v. 9.

In Necessariis unitas ; in non Necessariis Libertas ; in Utrisque
Charitas.

Concordia res parvæ crescunt, discordia maxima dilabuntur.

Peace and Union recommended: A

ESSAY

Preached before the Reverend Synod of Philadelphia

AND THE

Reverend Commission of the Synod of New-York

AT PHILADELPHIA, MAY the 24th, 1758.



BY FRANKLIN D.D.

Vice-Provost of the College and Rector of the Academy

in PHILADELPHIA.

His of our Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Peace shall be with you.
2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Printed by P. S. O. in the City of New-York.

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of God.

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Classical.

Containing the names of the persons who have



P R E F A C E.

BY A FRIEND.

HAVING been favoured with the perusal of the following discourse, before it was committed to the press, I should think myself highly deficient in point of justice, if I did not take this opportunity of recommending it to the serious attention of all ranks and denominations of christians; for all will find their spiritual state and frame of mind much benefited thereby.

BEING, both by genius and education, far raised above those lesser distinctions, which, to the disgrace of our profession, so much agitate the christian world,

world,—the pious and candid author uses no endeavours to promote favorite systems, and gain proselytes to party-tenets : He has sublimer things in view ! namely, to enforce those opinions that tend to render GOD more beloved and feared, and mankind more in peace and charity. Hence he strives, with a noble contention of soul, to recommend the great doctrines of FAITH and PRACTICE, as they are in the lively ORACLES OF JESUS, unobscured by the vain comments of men. His language, therefore, on this occasion, is, what it should be, —the language of one who believes what he speaks ; plain, nervous and unaffected, revealing the whole heart.

It is, indeed, sincerely to be lamented, that there should be strifes and conten-

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tions among men professing the same CHRISTIANITY, and more especially, between the members of the same particular church ! And sure I am, that if all mankind were actuated by the same liberal and christian spirit that appears in this discourse, not only the members of the particular church to which the author belongs, but even ALL who name the NAME OF CHRIST, would unite in the most essential parts of their holy possession. They would 'depart from iniquity, fear GOD, keep his commandments' and practise PEACE and FORBEARANCE with their neighbours.

THIS is a state 'devoutly to be wished for,' especially among the REFORMED CHURCHES at this dangerous juncture. The chief advantages gained over the

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Protestant interest by the church of Rome, has ever been by dividing its branches from one another; therein imitating the policy of the devil and his agents, who have always endeavoured to subvert CHRIST'S kingdom by engaging the zeal of christians in disputes about the modes and circumstances of worship, while they have been diverted from its essential parts,—their MAKER'S praises, and the practice of PEACE and RIGHTEOUSNESS.

IN this view, the author of the following discourse, will, in a very eminent degree, appear to deserve his share of that applause which he has so candidly bestowed on those who have been his fellow-laborers in restoring peace, and healing the breaches of their divided congregations. This event is at last accomplished,

plished and cannot fail to be matter of rejoicing to every CHRISTIAN, as it has been to the writer of this preface, tho' he claims no farther connexion with the parties concerned, than what arises from the general interest of religion and of this distressed community, which now, in a more particular manner, stands in need of UNION civil and religious, to support it against its numerous enemies.

M.

PHILADELPHIA, }
August 20th, 1758. }

B

PEACE }

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PEACE and UNION recommended, &c.

EPHESIANS IV. 1,---7: I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; with all lowliness and meekness; with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.

WHEN our gracious redeemer first made his appearance among us, the angel of the Lord, with a multitude of the heavenly host, proclaimed 'glory to GOD in the highest, and on earth PEACE and GOOD WILL towards mankind.' GOD, is the GOD of PEACE; CHRIST JESUS is the prince of PEACE; the Gospel is the gospel of PEACE; and to follow PEACE, and to love one another, is the distinguishing characteristic of his disciples. How strange is it, then, that so many who are called by his name, have so openly, and so notoriously failed in this main point, and have paid so little regard to his new commandment?

No men have more heartily hated and despised one another, no men have fought more bitterly, nor been deeper tainted with envy, wrath and malice, than many of those who proclaim themselves his followers. Even his ministers, under a pretence of promoting his kingdom, have kindled the flames of persecution, and have used cruel revilings, and anathemas or curses, and excommunications, and racks, and prisons, and inquisitions, and all the bloody instruments of destruction, in the name of our compassionate Saviour, to harass his subjects.

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum ?---

Tantane animis cælestibus iræ ?

COULD the peaceful religion of Jesus inspire men with so much cruelty ? Or can heavenly minds breathe out such rage and resentment ? No, my friends ; christians are commanded, by the ORACLES of GOD, to ‘ love one another ; to do good to all men, and to have PEACE among themselves.’ We have all one father, and belong all to the same family. We are all enlisted under the same banner ; have all the same dangers and the same enemies. We all depend on the same assistances ; are all embarked in the same cause ; are all travelling to the same country, and all expect a share in the same inheritance, with the saints in light. And for these reasons, UNANIMITY, PEACE, LOVE and FRIENDSHIP are our DUTY. And to fall out by the way, or to bite and devour one another, is indecent and unbecoming.

It

It is to enlist under the banner of the grand destroyer and enemy of mankind. It is to weaken, or to root out of our souls, that charity and good will, that are so essential to the christian temper.

As I am, on this occasion, called by providence, in a critical conjuncture, to recommend PEACE and UNITY to a number of christian ministers and people, I pray that the good spirit of GOD may breathe on us, and inspire us with dispositions to PEACE and LOVE, and with the spirit of a SOUND MIND. He can smooth and soften the rigid temper, and open a heaven in our hearts.

I HOPE, and persuade myself, my fathers and brethren, that you are all as much engaged in heart and affection as I can be, to pay the utmost deference to every command of Christ and his apostles; and as much determin'd to promote PEACE, HARMONY and UNION in all the churches, to the utmost of your influence. Our Lord 'walks among his candlesticks;' holds his ministers as stars in 'his right hand;' and where two or three of his servants are met together, in his name, he is present with them. His piercing eye sees thro' every disguise, and it is our honour 'and our interest' to be approved and finally rewarded by him.

UNDER such apprehensions of his presence, I will believe, that as we are all devoted to his service, so every one will wish me success, while I endeavour to
heal

heal breaches, and to promote peace: Therefore I will speak with freedom, and expect a patient and candid hearing in a cause, which it is so much every one's honour and duty to promote; and for this reason, I must recommend to your serious consideration the address of PAUL in his bonds to the church of Ephesus, which I have read to you already, as the subject of my following discourse.

IN these words, this church is warmly pressed in general, to 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called:' Or, as it is expressed, Phil. i. 20, 'to walk as becomes the gospel of CHRIST;' that is, thro' the grace of GOD, to endeavour to know, and to do their duty. To walk worthy of our vocation, is to live as becomes the children of GOD, and followers of JESUS CHRIST. It is to walk according to the precepts and commands of the gospel. It is to walk answerable to the aids and assistances afforded us by the holy spirit; answerable to the dignity and obligations of the christian name, and answerable to the high and glorious expectations of every sincere christian in a future state of honour and happiness.

IN the 2d verse, our apostle, in a more particular manner, recommends PEACE, UNITY and CONCORD, therein intimating, that to walk worthy their vocation, is to walk in love, and to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, which is the grand and important point I have in view on this occasion. And that

I may speak with the greater clearness, I propose, God assisting, to observe the following method.

I. I SHALL consider and explain the duty which is here commanded, viz. To keep the unity of the spirit in the BOND OF PEACE.

II. I SHALL briefly consider the state of the church militant, whose imperfect condition renders it impossible to obey this command, without CHARITY and MUTUAL FORBEARANCE.

III. I SHALL offer to your serious consideration, what the apostle recommends as the best expedients to promote and preserve PEACE among christians, viz. LOWLINESS and MEEKNESS, LONG-SUFFERING and FORBEARANCE in LOVE.

IV. I SHALL lay before you his arguments to enforce the discharge of THIS duty. And, LASTLY,

I SHALL make some remarks by way of application:

I. I am to consider and explain the duty enjoined in the text. Christians are not only commanded, 'if it be possible, as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men, and to give no offence to Jew or Gentile;' but they are obliged, in a more peculiar manner, as members of Christ's visible church, to cultivate peace and harmony among themselves. Our Lord expressly commands us to have PEACE with one

one another; and St. PAUL exhorts us to 'follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another;' for GOD is the author, not of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the faints. In the text we are to 'keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' We are commanded by the same authority, to 'be at peace among ourselves.' And again, 'be of one mind, live in peace, and the GOD of LOVE and PEACE shall be with you.'

WILL we, then, call Christ our lord and master, and refuse obedience to these plain precepts? The apostle James tells us, 'where envying and strife is, there is every evil work.' And the apostle PAUL makes strifes and divisions the fruits of a carnal, and not of a christian, temper: 'Whereas there is among you envy, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal?' He that has most charity, and is most condescending, (where condescension is necessary), has most of the gospel-spirit, and is most acceptable to him who has said, 'blessed are the PEACE MAKERS, for they shall be called the children of GOD.'

2. PEACE and UNITY are necessary in all states and governments. Nothing could resist the Roman power, till, crumbled into parties and torn by factions, they fell by their own arms: And the discords of Athens destroy'd that seat of LIBERTY, LEARNING and POLITENESS. On the other hand, small

states have flourished and grown powerful by peace and concord. Of this, Sparta is a memorable instance. Nor is this duty, so frequently recommended to the church of CHRIST, impossible or impracticable in itself. It has been, and is daily practised in many political, as well as religious societies, greatly for their temporal good and enolument. And will not the subjects of the PRINCE OF PEACE, from the nobler motives of the gospel, as cordially unite to love one another, and promote the kingdom of JESUS, as the subjects of any earthly potentates, to promote their worldly concerns? Nay, there is an union and concord among the rulers of the kingdom of darkness. Satan's kingdom is not divided against itself, else it could not stand! and is that impracticable by the SAINTS of GOD, and the followers of JESUS CHRIST, that is daily practised by wicked men, and fallen angels?----For shame! that we are so far outdone in those very points wherein we are commanded to excell.

3. BUT tho' we are called as christians to PEACE and UNION, it is not to unite to destroy the civil or religious rights of mankind; nor to promote parties, nor the peculiar SHIBBOLETHS of any of the contending denominations of christians, which are often the lesser matters of religion, and without any foundation in the holy scriptures. No: We are to unite to promote the honor of GOD; the good of mankind, and the pure and holy religion of our lord and master. For this reason all christians should join to maintain what they judge

to be the great truths of the gospel. " We are to hold fast the form of SOUND WORDS in faith and love, which is in CHRIST JESUS." We are to contend earnestly for the FAITH once delivered to the saints.

Now, tho' the churches have not agreed in fixing every fundamental truth, or article of faith; yet all the churches agree that some truths and articles are fundamental. Undoubtedly then to preserve and propagate these, must be one great design of christian union. Hence that eminent saying of one of the fathers----- " We must maintain union in essentials; forbearance in lesser matters, and charity in all things."

WE must also unite to promote external purity and holiness of life, for, without this, " no man shall see the LORD." 'Tis necessary to the conversion of sinners, and the reformation of mankind. We are to have " no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but must rather reprove them. We should remember that " CHRIST came to seek and to save lost sinners, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan to serve the LIVING G O D;" and as his disciples, and soldiers, we should all unite under him as our head, to promote the same cause. And tho' we are not, nor cannot, be agreed about all the modes of promoting these great ends, and perhaps never will; in this imperfect state, yet we must consider, that while we have all one aim, or while we rather promote

more than oppose this GRAND DESIGN, we are to treat one another as friends, tho' we are not agreed in all things. For these are for us who are not against us, as CHRIST said of those that cast out devils in his name, tho' they followed him not.

4. In promoting and preserving PEACE and UNITY among christians, we are carefully to follow the commands and example of CHRIST, and his apostles; and not the expedients of our own devising. We must not expect that all our christian brethren can attain to equal degrees of knowledge, or purity, much less must we set up ourselves for the standard. There was much difference in sentiment in the jewish church, concerning the great command of the law, the traditions of the elders; and concerning the MESSIAH, and the nature of his kingdom; yet our Lord kept communion with them, and try'd to reclaim them. Nay, he bore patiently with the ignorance and mistakes of his own disciples.-----In the days of the apostles, what different sentiments prevailed in the christian churches about circumcision, the law of MOSES, the difference of meats, and many other jewish ceremonies? Thousands of Jews that were converted, as JAMES said; were zealous of the law of MOSES, while the Gentile converts made a stand for CHRISTIAN LIBERTY. Yet so far is the apostle PAUL from allowing the churches of CHRIST to divide for this diversity of opinion, that he earnestly presses them to charity and mutual forbearance in these things. Hereby he informs us, that tho' church-members be under many mistakes,

mistakes, yet they may be honest men, and sincere christians, who serve GOD acceptably, and are approved by him.

IF we would maintain peace and harmony in the house of CHRIST, such are to be received, but not to doubtful disputations. And such a forbearance in lesser matters is necessary, since a perfect agreement in all things (as shall be shewn under the next head) is impossible in the church militant. And, for this reason, acts of uniformity in religion are of no use, but to fetter the conscience, and to harass CHRIST's subjects. In short, to maintain union, we must take heed to our own spirits, must be prudent and patient; must bear with many things that we do not perfectly approve of in our neighbours, and must pray for the spirit of GOD, "whose fruits are love, and peace; to work in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure." AND

THIS brings me to the SECOND HEAD, which was to consider the temper, character and circumstances of those persons who compose the visible church of CHRIST, which will greatly help us to understand the nature of the peace and union here required; and lead us to the most efficacious means to procure and preserve it.

I. IN this body, all men have not equal gifts by nature, nor equal opportunities of improving their natural gifts and abilities. There will be some, in

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all ages, and in every church, of more extensive knowledge, "scribes instructed into the kingdom of heaven," who can bring out of their treasures things new and old: "APOLLOS's mighty in the scripture." These are stars of the first magnitude; and the eyes of CHRIST's body the church, provided their gitts be duly qualified with meekness, humillity and condescension, to their weaker, tho' useful brethren. The eye has need of the hand, and the foot, for they are the useful and active members of the same body. Now such men, even tho' saints, have no small trial to bear with the weakness, narrowness, and ignorance of some of their fellow-christians; who are pleased with their own measure of light and knowledge; are ready to make them the standard to all others; and are apt to condemn and revile all that see things in a light different from themselves. Thousands of zealous christians were ready to deliver PAUL to the secular powers, for differing from them about the law of MOSES.-----On the other hand, a mixture of pride, and a self satisfaction from superior knowledge, are apt to swell men with conceit, and to prompt them to despise and set at nought their weaker brethren. For, as the apostle tells us, "knowledge puffeth up, "but charity edifieth." We should remember, that no two men are agreed in all points; and that where they are agreed, they generally differ in their ways of explaining and defending them. CHRIST, we are told, has given different gifts to the members and ministers of his church, for their mutual edification and advantage. And men of the most extensive know-

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ledge have not always been more useful than men of smaller attainments, accompanied with zeal and industry. For this reason, then, both should love, and neither should despise, nor set at nought his brother, nor refuse his assistance.

2. MEN's natural tempers require great patience and forbearance. Some are naturally proud and imperious; and, in all things like Diotrophes, they love to have the preheminance. Such should learn to abate of their demands, and should know that others in CHRIST's house have the same rights with themselves. Some view only one side of a question, and draw hasty conclusions, without sufficiently examining the premises. And hence they are impatient of contradiction, tenacious of their mistakes, and have a sovereign contempt for all that differ from them. Some are dull and slow, and require time to consider and examine; and these we are apt to condemn as obstinate bigots, or stupid fools. Some are extremely selfish, and fond of what they call their own, and confine righteousness and all that is excellent, within the little circle of a particular party. They entertain an overweening notion of their own tenets, modes of worship, and distinguishing SHIBBOLETHS; and consequently are censorious, and uncharitable to all others. Thus the Jews derided the Christians, and the judaizing Christians the Gentile converts; and the church of Rome confines salvation to her own votaries. The general fault of all is, that they are too much wrapt up in self-attachments, and have narrow and illiberal notions

notions of GOD and the kingdom of his son JESUS CHRIST, and a strong inclination to promote and aggrandize themselves.

OBSTINACY is natural to some, while others are easily imposed on and deceived, and to and fro "with every wind of doctrine;" and some so much regard imaginary points of honor, that they will rather persist in the wrong, than give up an opinion they have once espoused, lest they should have the imaginary disgrace of submitting, or of being vanquished. These are all bad distempers, both in sinners and saints, but will prevail while we are in this imperfect state.

Now all these, and many other such flaws in men's tempers, are to be dealt with softly and gently; and in a way that contributes most to the glory of GOD, and the maintainence of PEACE and VIRTUE among men. The most friendly methods of address must be studied; what is good in them must be esteemed and commended, and the stronger must bear the infirmities of the weaker. We are called by CHRIST to exercise much long-suffering and forbearance towards all such persons, provided that christian liberty can be preserved, and that such weak or narrow, or proud, or selfish persons impose not their opinions on their brethren.

5. Men's different attainments in grace and holiness, make much patience and forbearance necessary.

Men

Men of superior holiness and piety must be grieved at many things, even in good, but weak men, as well as in the ignorant and unconverted. Such are sometimes to be instructed and admonished; sometimes to be reprov'd tenderly, and in private; and sometimes to be openly rebuked, and yet are by no means to be cast out of the church. For the church is CHRIST'S SCHOOL, to convert and reform sinners, and to build up his weak saints in holiness and purity.

MEN of warmth and zeal, can hardly bear with their fellow-christians of equal goodness, who are naturally more calm and moderate; who are not so easily, nor so vehemently, moved against the errors and iniquities of the times, as they themselves are. They are apt to censure, or ready to break communion with them, as if they were either luke-warm and careless, or knaves at the bottom, and secret deceivers. And young converts are not only ready to blame and condemn the ignorant, the prophane, and the careless; but even to censure men of superior attainments and experience, who enjoy the comforts of religion, without that emotion and transport, which they felt at their first experience of the spiritual life. In all such cases nothing but charity and forbearance can maintain love and peace. The scriptures rank christians into THREE CLASSES, VIZ. CHILDREN, YOUNG-MEN and FATHERS. Some, in CHRIST'S visible church, are little children, dear to GOD, and members of his family, yet are children in knowledge; noisy, peevish and troublesome,

blesome, and have every other bad quality of children. Nevertheless, as they are HIS children, they are to be treated with tenderness, and are entitled to the love, the care and affection of the young men and fathers; that is, the stronger christians, notwithstanding these failings and imperfections.

4. THE nature of gospel-truths lays a deep foundation for great forbearance in the church of CHRIST. For tho' all truths are of singular advantage, yet they are not all of equal importance. The great things to be believed and practised are plain; but some things are more dark and obscure, and depend on our knowledge of chronology or jewish antiquities. Some things are hard to be understood, and have a reference to events yet wrapt up in the womb of futurity. Now, in all such cases, there is room even for good men to differ, and adhere to their particular notions and interpretations, without any prejudice to our common salvation.

ARE the doctrines about the degrees of affinity and consanguinity, to be observed in marriage, of equal importance with the belief of a GOD, and future state, and the method of salvation thro' a REDEEMER? Is a point in chronology, or a difference in sentiment about Melchizedeck, of equal importance with the denying the doctrine of the NEW-BIRTH, the satisfaction of CHRIST, or the aids of the SPIRIT? Or may not men differ a-

about the millenium, the return of the Jews to Judea at their conversion, and many other things, rather than in the necessity of a holy life? Time must remove some difficulties relating to scripture-prophecies; and the light of heaven, or the beatific vision, will possibly be the best comment to understand some other difficult texts. And how can men live together in peace without forbearance in such matters?

SOME duties are strictly commanded in scripture, but the ways and modes of performing these duties are, in a great measure, left to human direction, as is well observed in our confession of faith †. The public worship of GOD, and the administration of the sacraments, are never to be neglected; but the time, place, and modes that are most for edification, are not so precisely pointed out. In these things, and all of the like nature, where we have only general directions, there is great room for differing in judgment; and in such points the greatest and best men have differed,

† CHAP. I. SECT. 6. Sub. Fin. "There are some circumstances concerning the worship of GOD, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word which are always to be observed."
 "All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned but the unlearned in a due use of the ordinary means may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them."

differed, and will probably differ, till the church of GOD be translated from this state of ignorance and imperfection. Probably then, in the mean time, there may be no better way of preserving peace and unity, than to leave every man in all such points to the persuasion of his own mind; and to exercise charity, forbearance and brotherly kindness where the church believes the true design of the gospel is preserved, and its most essential duties faithfully performed. What the apostle determined concerning the observance of the new moons and jewish feasts is applicable in all such cases. "One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be persuaded in his own mind."

5. This leads to another remark, which is, that men are more affected with what they see, than with what they hear. And all men, but more especially weak christians, have a peculiar fondness for the ways to which they were early accustomed, and for the modes of religion that they have seen practised with solemnity and a certain awe of piety and devotion. 'Tis therefore but natural for them to pay a high regard to those ways and forms in which they have experienced much of the grace of GOD, and comforts of religion. This is, in a particular manner, applicable to the different modes of public worship, and of receiving the holy sacraments. Good men, who are for bringing all to their own measures, should remember that their fellow-christians have equal

qual pleas for adhering to their own particular modes. They may have experienced as much of the life and power, and comforts of religion, in the way wherein they have been accustomed to attend on CHRIST in his ordinances, as those who are endeavouring to make them profelytes. And it is certain, that GOD who appointed these ordinances, has blessed them to his churches, tho' they have differed, and do differ, in the modes and ways of using them.

AND, in a church like ours in America, collected from different churches of CHRIST in Europe, who have followed different modes and ways of obeying the "great and general commands of the gospel," there is a peculiar call for charity and forbearance. And this becomes the more necessary, as the weaker, or the more zealous, christians will ever be for imposing their favourite notions and practices, as what are alone authorized by the gospel. Now, in such circumstances, the stronger of CHRIST's servants must exert themselves, to maintain to all their christian liberty; to prevent impositions, and uncharitableness among christians who differ in lesser matters; and should be contented to shew their own sentiments in all such matters, by peaceably using that way, or mode, which they judge most agreeable to the word of GOD, and most for edification in their particular circumstances.

[Here the discourse may be divided by any who think it too long.]

FROM

3. FROM this view of CHRIST's visible church I am led to consider what christians are obliged to do to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, which was the THIRD THING proposed.

1. AND here we must observe, that there is no living infallible judge appointed by CHRIST, to determine all controversies in his church, and so to maintain peace and unity. Synods, and councils, and popes, and fathers, have erred, and are liable to mistakes ; for, as the apostle informs us, we all " know but in part". And this failure in knowledge, is no less the lot of the Roman pontiff, than of other men. The proud assuming church of Rome, is as much divided in sentiments and affection as any other church, notwithstanding all her vain pretences. Every man must search the scriptures with the Bereans, as far as he is capable ; must believe for himself, and call no man on earth his master. The great doctrines of christianity are plain, and GOD will guide the meek and lowly in the way that they should go. Tho' it is in vain to pretend to be free from mistakes, yet may we safely depend on the spirit of GOD to preserve us from damnable errors ; for as many as are the children of GOD are led by his spirit. We are not to expect to be saved by the infallibility of our opinions, more than by the unfinning obedience of our practice. Both are equally impossible, and a dependence on either for salvation, is equally to be rejected.

2. Nor is church unity, to be maintained by inquisitions, or acts for uniformity in religion. These secular engines of men's contrivance, may distress tender consciences, and make hypocrites, but cannot enlighten the understanding. Every man must believe according to evidence; and all men are not capable of the same proofs, nor of seeing things in the same point of view. And is there no tenderness for such? Suppose any church, or secular powers, or both in conjunction, are under mistakes. Will they impose them on men who can see, or are even persuaded that they see, these mistakes? How will the imposers vindicate their conduct to CHRIST? Or who gave them such authority over his servants? CHRIST'S kingdom is not of this world; nor is it, like the kingdoms of this world, to be supported by force and arms. The secular powers are to take care that their subjects be good members of civil society; and they are to be a terror to evil doers; but they are no ministers of CHRIST'S kingdom, nor does he require the aids of their power to maintain peace and unity in his churches.

3. BUT to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, we should study to be well acquainted with the great truths of the gospel, that are plain and easy; and in which the churches of CHRIST are generally agreed. We should determine, and resolve to promote holiness and purity, peace and brotherly love. We should pity the weakness and imperfections of our brethren. We should imitate the
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tendernefs and forbearance of CHRIST and his apostles, and always remember our own infirmities, and liableness to mistake. And, actuated by a sense of these things, we should sincerely love ALL that profess to believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and treat them as brethren, if, in any tolerable degree, they maintain his truths, and obey his gospel. If we desire or expect peace in the church, we must in a particular manner take care to cultivate the seeds of it in our own tempers. But this brings me to enforce the directions in the text, as the most effectual expedients to allay our animosities, and promote peace and unity among christians; and these are **LOWLINESS OF MIND, MEEKNESS, LONG-SUFFERING and FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.**

LOWLINESS OF MIND, OR HUMILITY, stands first, and is a grace of great importance to promote and maintain peace and unity among mankind, because from pride comes contention; whereas the humble man has no over-weening conceit of himself, which might prompt him to despise, or set at nought his brother.----Pride is vain, fond of power, haughty, assuming and intolerable.----But humility gives us juster, and more becoming sentiments of ourselves, and our attainments.----It levels the pride of the wise, and of the disputers of this world; teaches them that their understandings are narrow, and limited; that there are many things beyond their confined grasp, and too high for them to understand.----It commands

us to give credit to GOD's testimony in matters of revelation ; not to be wise above what is written ; and above all, not to be positive or dogmatical. It will keep us mindful that we have been sometimes mistaken, where we were very sanguine and certain that we were right, and will ever bring us to look to GOD for light and direction. It will keep us open to conviction, willing to learn, and ready to review our sentiments. In short, it will make us tender of our censures, and charitable to others from a sense of human weakness, even where we judge them mistaken, as long as they give evidences that they are sincere and conscientious.

HUMILITY will give us a moderate opinion of our knowledge and attainments, compared with those of other men. If we know more than some of our brethren in some particulars, do they not exceed us in other parts of useful knowledge ? Do not many know more than we do ? Or, suppose our knowledge ever so extensive, what have we that we did not first receive ? Does not the grace of GOD make one man differ from another in attainments, as one star from another in glory ? Why then should any man despise his brother, because GOD has not thought fit to distinguish him so eminently for wisdom and knowledge. 'Tis certain, that this great and honorable gift is no easy trust, if we endeavour to improve it aright. KNOWLEDGE with HUMILITY is amiable and useful ; but KNOWLEDGE with PRIDE is the source of contentions, the bane of the church, and the destruction of mankind.

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HUMILITY will also cure that pride and censoriousness that arises from an opinion of superior holiness and purity. The proud pharisees trusted that they were righteous, and despised others. HUMILITY in the mouth of the best men, will speak the language of holy JOE, "Lord I am vile, what shall I answer?" Or will say with the Psalmist, "If thou, LORD, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who should stand?" How far do we all come short of what the law of GOD requires, and of what we pray, and resolve to be? Who would maintain a tolerable character in the world, if all the workings of his soul, if all his vain and sinful thoughts were open to our view, "Who can understand his errors?" And what need has every one to pray that GOD would cleanse him from secret faults. A lowlie sense of our own need of pardon and of CHRIST's imputed righteousness, will keep us from the pharasaical arrogance of thanking God that we are "not as other men;" and much more will it prevent our casting out our weaker brethren, or rending and dividing the churches, under pretences that they come not up in all things to our attainments in purity and holiness. It will make us charitable to others where there is the appearance of grace and a holy life; merciful and pitiful to human failures and miscarriages, knowing that we are in the flesh, and liable to temptations. It will excite compassion towards those that are ignorant, and out of the way; and will make us ready to restore such as have fallen, "in the spirit of meekness."

In short, humility will teach us our wants and dependence on one another; will make men of high rank condescend to those who are their inferiors; and will promote a general desire among all men to oblige one another; for "the eye cannot say to the hand or the foot, I have no need of thee." Where there are real excellencies, it will engage us to observe and esteem them, and in lowliness of mind to think others better than ourselves. How does it win the hearts of mankind, to see men of superior stations, of superior knowledge, or superior holiness, humble and obliging? How justly then is this grace recommended in the text, as a powerful mean to preserve peace and unity.

MEEKNESS is next recommended, as necessary for the same purpose. CHRIST has pronounced the meek blessed. We are commanded "to receive with meekness the ingrafted word;" and our LORD bids us "learn of him; to be meek and lowly in spirit." How useful is this heavenly temper to maintain peace? It is not easily provoked, but slow to wrath. It prevents resentments to exceed the demerit of the offence; will not speak unadvisedly to widen breaches, by ill natured and irritating reproaches; but rather inclines to give "a soft answer," that "turneth away wrath." The meek soul, takes no advantages of his neighbour's temper; is ready to be reconciled after a breach, knowing that "anger resteth in the bosom of fools;" and is unwilling to take hasty or severe methods of redress, when a redress becomes necessary.

As **MEEKNESS** is not ready to take, so it is cautious of giving any man offence: It considers men's humors, and is careful not to fret or provoke them; renders to all men their dues; is conscientious in the discharge of relative duties; and studies by word or deed to give no just ground of offence. "Put them in mind," says the apostle, "to speak evil of no man," to be no brawlers, but gently shewing all **MEEKNESS** unto all men.----But above all, this grace will suppress our anger and passion in matters of religion; will oblige us to make allowances for smaller differences; will manage debates, where debates are necessary, with coolness and candor, moderation and a just regard to reason and argument. The apostle James gives this as the character of a wise man, who is endowed with knowledge, that he shews, out of a good conversation, his works with "meekness of wisdom:" And Paul says, "the servant of the Lord must be gentle unto all men, patient, in **MEEKNESS** instructing those that oppose themselves; if peradventure **GOD** will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

LONG-SUFFERING is next recommended. **GOD** bears long with us, and he commands us to bear with one another. Without this, there can be no peace maintained in private families, in civil societies, or in the churches of **CHRIST**. When the apostle recommends peace and unity to the church at Rome, he uses these words, "now the **GOD** of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded towards
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"one another." Here two divine perfections are mentioned to promote unity and peace: **THE GOD OF PATIENCE**, because he patiently bears with sinners, and teaches and enables them to bear with one another; and unless we do so, we are not his children, nor can we have peace among ourselves. To this is annexed, **THE GOD OF CONSOLATION**, because peace in the churches of **CHRIST** is one main spring of comfort and edification.

WE cannot live in **CHRIST**'s visible church, where there is so much weakness and imperfection, without bearing with many things, which we cannot entirely approve. When we consider how easily all men are betrayed thro' infirmity, passion, or surprise, to things that lessen their own honor, and hurt their neighbours; when we consider their different attainments in knowledge and grace; their different tempers, education and views; we must either suffer wrongs, bear injuries and provocations, and make allowances for inadvertencies, indiscretions and mistakes, else we cannot live as christians; but he that suffers long, and learns to bear with these evils, lives superior to the lesser storms of life, and in patience possesses his soul; while the jealous and captious, the peevish and hasty, live in continual vexation, and disturb their own peace and the peace of their neighbours.

4. **WE** are commanded to **FORBEAR ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE**. In order to peace, we are not only to **BEAR**, but to **FORBEAR**. No virtue is more neces-

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fary to men, in all stations and relations of life, than forbearance. We can never set all men right. We need great allowance and forbearance ourselves, and should give the same to others. Epictetus said many fine things as a philosopher, and yet they may be all comprehended in BEARING and FORBEARING. But this is a duty not only recommended by reason, but also by revelation. The inspired apostle commands us, "Put on therefore, as the elect of GOD, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, FORBEARING one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as CHRIST forgave you, so do ye also." CHRIST commands us to forgive an offending brother as oft as seventy times seven. 'Tis the character of charity, "that it beareth all things;" and in the epistle to the Galatians, christians are commanded to "bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law."

'Tis impossible for persons so different in their tempers, knowledge and grace, to live as the members of the same body, without long-suffering and forbearance, nothing being more impracticable than to bring all men in all things, to an uniformity in sentiments. And nothing has so much divided and torn in pieces the churches of CHRIST, as an imposing intolerant spirit. Many things will ever demand compassion and forbearance and love; and they can only by such gentle methods be removed, or healed, or prevented from hurting the church of CHRIST. What furious debates

bates prevailed in the churches about the time of keeping of Easter; about the descent into hell; about the habit of clergymen, and the like;—yet now-a-days, no church is much concerned about these things; they are neither considered nor respected as the essentials, or great matters of religion. It seems at length, as agreed among christians of good sense, and a charitable turn of mind in all churches, that these, and many such things, demand christian forbearance. In short, no church will ever subsist long on a firm foundation, without a tolerating and forbearing spirit in the lesser matters; unity in the great matters of faith and practice; and cordial charity in all things.

AND this brings me to another remark, founded on the text, viz. That our forbearance must not proceed from pride, haughtiness, peevishness or disregard, as if our brethren were unworthy our notice; This will neither mend, nor unite them to us. Our forbearance must be in love. This is CHRIST's new commandment, and the grand cement of the church. 'Tis a sovereign remedy for our censures and jealousies. It will excite us to abate and yield as much as we can for peace, and to desire an entire union even where we differ. When christians do not love one another, they magnify differences, find pretences to divide; and wish, and seek, and rejoice in one another's ruin! But to engage us to forbear and to love one another, let us always remember what the apostle John says, "he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God that he hath not seen."

IV. To enforce this great and necessary duty of **PEACE** and **UNITY**, the apostle uses a variety of the most powerful arguments, that I am now in the **FOURTH PLACE**, briefly to open up, and offer to your serious consideration: "**THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT,**" &c.

[**THERE IS ONE BODY.**] **HERE**, and in many other places of the holy scriptures, christians are represented as one august body, whereof **CHRIST** is the **HEAD**. And this consideration must be a powerful motive to union, love and concord. For nothing is more unnatural, than for members of the same body, to destroy one another. They are all appointed for mutual service, and "the eye cannot say to the hand or the foot, I have no need of you." Fools, and madmen, tear their own flesh, and mangle their own limbs. Can we then, be so mad, or so cruel to fellow-members of that christian body to which we belong, of that body of which **CHRIST** is the head, as to cut them off as useless, or to treat them as if we had no connexion with them? Do we believe that our **LORD** will not plead their cause? Or is it decent, safe, or honourable, to render any person useless or contemptible, whom he vouchsafes to approve?

MENENIUS AGGRIPA, a nobleman of great wisdom, reduced the discontented Romans, and brought them to their temper and duty, by shewing how inconsistent it would be with the welfare

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of the body, for the members and the belly to quarrel. This so touched these discontented heathens; that they readily came to terms of peace and reconciliation, with the senate. And shall the members of CHRIST's body, have less regard to their common safety and welfare? Do not our divisions as much expose and weaken us, as the divisions in that empire did the Romans? Or shall it be said, that all other united bodies are more affectionate, and more ready to help and befriend one another than christians? Or shall we, of all denominations of christians be thought the worst and most unfriendly? Sure this is indecent and greatly out of character! The heathens admired how the primitive christians loved one another.---Will CHRIST our head, will the good angels, or will sober good men approve our contentions and divisions? And if such a conduct be scandalous and unsafe, no church has a louder call for a reformation than ours at this very time.

[THERE IS ONE SPIRIT.] 2. THERE is one spirit that inspires, strengthens, and guides all the children of GOD, tho' his graces be given in various degrees. "As many as are the children of God, are led by the spirit of God, and if any man have not the spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his," his fruits are LOVE, JOY and PEACE. And can men who are habitually unkind and uncharitable say they are led or guided by this blest agent? Can such as will not listen to terms of love and friendship with their fellow-christians, pretend to his guidance;

dance, or are they in any tolerable degree fitted to live in the kingdom of heaven, where perfect love and friendship reigns? 'Tis the great work of the spirit in the œconomy of redemption, to unite all believers to CHRIST, as their head, and to unite them in peace and love among themselves. Sure then, nothing can be more unchristian, or more contrary to his design, than envy, strife and contention.

CAN he inspire hatred or uncharitableness? Or be the author of schisms and divisions? No, these things are the deeds of the flesh, and the works of the kingdom of darkness, which he came to destroy. And must it not grieve him to see this grand design disappointed. Sure we cannot imagine that all christians act and believe as inspired with one spirit, while they are divided and torn into parties, and while they promote the kingdom of the devil, by their malice, rage and uncharitableness. Shall infernal spirits more faithfully unite under their hellish leader, than profess'd christians under the leading and conduct of the spirit of GOD? Or will the peace of GOD rest on those who neither love nor seek peace with one another? A DIVIDED church, is a house divided against itself, and he that foment or encourages, or secretly wishes for the continuance of such a state, is destroying the church of CHRIST, he may provoke the holy spirit to withdraw his comfortable and healing influences, and leave him to follow the devices of his own blinded understanding.

[ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.] 3. ANOTHER argument he uses, is, that we are all called in one hope of our calling. As lost sinners, we have all the same hopes of pardon, and the favor of GOD in this world, and of eternal life in the next. And should not these hopes humble our pride, inspire us with love, and unite us in peace and friendship: We have all offended GOD, and continue daily to offend him, and will we forgive nothing, who must be ruin'd forever, unless he forgive us so much? Our compassionate Redeemer strongly assures us, "that unless we from our hearts forgive every man his brother their trespasses, neither will GOD forgive us". Let all that grumble, and are sour, and uncharitable, and unwilling to keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE consider, that these are the words of Christ, and that heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than any of his words shall fall to the ground. If we then, have all one hope to be pardoned, and forgiven, why will we not all as cordially receive Christs declarations and comply with the gospel terms, on which these hopes are founded?

WE all hope for the same inheritance, and are travelling to IMMANUEL'S land, and is it not hard, that brethren cannot travel together in peace, but will fall out by the way? Shall we refuse to live together in unity on earth, who soon hope to be fellow members of the glorious general assembly and church

church of the FIRST-BORN? Sure none of us hate any of our brethren to that degree, that we wish never to see them in the kingdom of glory. And shall we who hope soon to unite in singing the song of MOSES and the LAMBS in heaven, refuse to unite together, at the command of our REDEEMER, to promote his kingdom and interest upon earth.

[ONE LORD.] 4. ANOTHER argument to engage us to peace and unity is, that we have all ONE LORD: Christ is not divided. He has but one interest, and in this all his followers ought to be united. But can his kingdom be so well promoted, while his subjects are divided? Or if we all faithfully serve the same master, how can we be at variance? Shall we, then, who are all enlisted under his banner, all united against one common enemy, all called by his name, and all protected and provided for by his power and grace; shall we who are all as living stones built on the same foundation, or as living members deriving vital influence from the same head; shall we, I say, notwithstanding all these endearing ties, worry and calumniate, and hate, and despise one another?

CHRIST commands us to be at peace among ourselves. He searches our hearts, and knows our most secret inclinations, and 'tis vain to call him our Lord, unless the powers of our souls are subject to his influence, and unless we yield an unreserved obedience to whatsoever he commands us. Would our Lord
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preside in our assembly as he did among his disciples, or would he condescend to appear in clouded majesty, as he will appear to judge the world, and would he command us to be at peace among ourselves, would we not lay aside our grudges, would not all our cavils and difficulties vanish? And would we not cast ourselves down at his feet, and with tears of joy obey him. The case is now the same, we know that he is really, tho' not visibly present with us. We know as well that he has commanded this duty, as if we heard his living voice. We know that he sees thro' all our pretences and excuses, and knows "all the divisions of Reuben," that occasions the thoughts of the heart. Can any argument then be stronger, or can any thing more powerfully excite us to this duty, than that we are all united to Christ as our **COMMON LORD**, and should be united to one another.

[**ONE FAITH.**] 5. **THERE** is but one faith. That faith which was once delivered to the saints, the doctrines of salvation by a crucified saviour which we have all believed, and all embraced. And there is but one grace by faith, by which we are all united to **JESUS CHRIST**. And since we are so closely united in the same faith, and in the same designs, under the same **LORD AND MASTER**, how can we be divided as enemies, or hate one another?

[**ONE BAPTISM.**] 6. **THERE** is but one baptism, by which we were all admitted as members of the same

same visible church, enlisted as good soldiers under CHRIST's banner, and devoted to the service of the living GOD. By our baptisms we are obliged to resist the world, the flesh and the devil; to keep the commandments of GOD, and to promote his honor, and the salvation of lost sinners. And can these things be as effectually promoted, while we despise and revile, as if we aided and assisted one another? If we were enlisted under different leaders, we might be tempted to divide to promote their different interests; and therefore to cure the CORINTHIAN divisions, PAUL uses this same argument drawn from our baptism: Is "CHRIST divided, says the apostle; was PAUL crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of PAUL?"

[ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.]

7. LASTLY: To excite us to live as one united body, he puts us in mind that we have all but one Father. GOD honours us with the endearing name of his children. But can we say that we are like him who is love, and dwells in love, if we are filled with hatred and ill-nature? Does it become rebels, who are exalted to such privileges and expectations? Does it become the poor apostate children of ADAM, who are taken into his family thro' grace and favor, to dishonor him and themselves, by quarrels and contentions? Or will the children of so benevolent a parent bite and devour one another? O my brethren, let us remember this endearing NAME, and live in peace, that the GOD of peace may be with us!

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As these arguments have been urged by an inspired Apostle, for the very same ends for which I have used them, they must have the same force to us as the church of Ephesus, for we see that we all claim the same glorious privileges that belonged to that church; we all belong to the same Lord, have all one faith, and one hope; are all admitted by baptism as members of the same church, are all led by the same Spirit, and all count it our honor, and our happiness, to have GOD for our Father: And for these reasons, are indispensibly obliged, unless we would forfeit these privileges, to live in peace; to love one another as brethren, and to observe this apostolic command, which is to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

APPLICATION.

1. From this view we have taken, of the members of CHRIST's visible church, who are so unlike one another in knowledge, in temper, in education, and in the attainments of holiness, we may be convinced, tho' peace and unity be a great and an indispensable duty, and of the highest importance to the churches of CHRIST, yet it is not to be procured, nor preserved without patience, forbearance and self-denial. Our own proud tempers are the great obstacles; and these we must first deal with. How unreasonable is it for any man to expect that his neighbour shall do all, and

and he himself do nothing? How arrogant to pretend to dictate the terms of peace to others, without setting the example by gentleness, and a christian compliance with all their reasonable demands? Has any man a right to think that all the world shall bend to his notions, and yield him uncontested obedience? Let us suppose ourselves infallibly right; so was our LORD JESUS, yet he bore with many lesser faults and infirmities in his disciples, thereby setting us an example that we should follow his steps. Did the old Romans count it their honor to forgive every personal injury that came in competition with the good of their common-wealth, and shall the redeemed of the LORD, under the light of the gospel do less for the glory of Zion, and the good of the christian world? It would certainly give us joy to see breaches heal'd, and peace restor'd in any branch of CHRIST's church, and have we not the grace and resolution to practise that in our own case, which we so much love and applaud in others.

IN a word, my fathers and brethren, besides all the arguments I have already mentioned, give me leave to add, that such is the situation of our affairs, both temporal and spiritual, that we must determine to lay aside our fruitless animosities, or behold our religion destroy'd and our names become a reproach among good men. The sole question now is, whe-

Hence that honorable expression among them, "Condonare inimicitias Reipublicæ"

ther we can forbear and forgive one another; or whether we are determined to sacrifice character, duty, and happiness to pride, obstinacy, love of superiority or false honor? What a shame it is, to see men, who can follow peace, when it is for their temporal advantage, neglect and refuse it in the important affairs of their eternal salvation! What name does such a conduct deserve? It is flagrant rebellion against the almighty GOD, open despite to that great and new commandment, which he has made the test of our christianity, and the first proof of our allegiance to the kingdom of his son JESUS.

2. FROM what has been said, 'tis evident, that christians can only be agreed in the great matters of faith and practice; and must exercise charity in many things where they cannot agree. Hence allow me to remark, my fathers and brethren, that we must either disobey GOD, and proclaim to the world that we are among the very worst of men; or we must unite in peace and friendship. For no protestant church, no denomination of christians, are more unanimously agreed in the essentials of religion, than we are. Our synods have no disputes concerning their general plan of doctrine, worship, discipline and church government. And the greatest part of our ministers on both sides, never gave one another the least offence: Few of those who heretofore differ'd are now alive; and those who are alive, have long ago profess'd and exercised friendship to one another.

ther: Let me then conjure and beseech you, in the name of CHRIST, to examine your conduct. What is the bane of our church? What can tempt us to live as if we had no connections with one another? Or what root of bitterness destroys our mutual harmony? Look on the divided state of our flocks! See the limbs of the same body torn asunder! And many of them by our unhappy divisions like to be forever deprived of gospel ordinances! Is this a state favourable to the religion of one common master, or advantageous to ourselves? How contemptible a body does it render us? How easy a prey to our foes, if any think fit to deceive or mislead us? And how great a reproach to our friends? Are we not ripening for a stroke from our antichristian enemy, and ill prepared for such a day of trouble and rebuke? Would we willingly die in such a state of contention, and leave such a mischievous legacy to our children? O my fathers, brethren and friends! let us at last resolve to obey the gospel; live in peace, and the GOD OF PEACE will be with us.---And let us pray that the spirit of grace would give a healing temper to all the divided churches of CHRIST.

3. WITHOUT such a life, what good can we look for here? Or with what confidence can we call ourselves the ministers of the blessed JESUS? Every one should rather consider his own mistakes, than be eagle-ey'd to mark and expose his neighbour's. We must bear with our people, and one another. We must not be self-willed nor self-pleasers; nor

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must we put the labouring oar into our brother's hand, and sit at our ease and command him. All the meekness and condescension which the Apostle so warmly recommends is necessary; and as well may we expect the cure without the means, as well may we expect a harvest without plowing and sowing, or a victory without toils, and dangers, and watchings, as peace without forgiveness, self-denial, and forbearance. And shall we decline any difficulties in obtaining that which so much belongs to our christian profession? Or shall we be discouraged thro' fear or the danger of disappointment? Let us do our endeavours; Men's hearts are in God's hand. The duty is ours, and the blessing is his. No good man should be ever discouraged from his duty, thro' fear of opposition; and why then should we look for better success or more ease in the world, than the best of God's servants? Or will we do nothing 'till there be no opposition in promoting the kingdom of CHRIST? Or shall we live to see such happy days? --- This time is rather to be wished for than expected, in this state of suffering and of sin. But will we run no risques, "nor cast our nets again at the commands of CHRIST, tho' we have hitherto toiled and taken nothing?"

ONCE MORE, I entreat you, my fathers and brethren, let us, when so loudly called upon, dare to do our duty, and leave the success in the hands of ALMIGHTY WISDOM.

4. ALLOW

While men are weak, or wicked, there will be opposition to every good undertaking.

4. ALLOW me to make one remark more from what has been said, and I shall have done. The best men have, in every society been the most charitable, peaceable, and condescending; the most open to conviction, and most ready to forgive injuries. They ever breathe the spirit of peace and goodwill, and are remarkable for a growing conformity to the peaceful state of the blest above.

As for us, my brethren, the greatest and best men of our particular persuasion, who were heretofore unhappily concern'd in our divisions, have, to my certain knowledge, most heartily lamented them, and used unwearied diligence for establishing peace, and longed to see it accomplished. The reverend, exemplary, and pious fathers of this church, Messrs. JOHN THOMPSON, JONATHAN DICKENSON, THOMAS EVANS, SAMUEL BLAIR, FRANCIS MCHENRY, and AARON BURR, who we have good reason to believe, are now in glory, pressed earnestly after it, fought for it, and labour'd to accomplish it, till they were called from their labours here, to a better state. And of those who now survive, Mr. GEORGE GILESPIE, that pious, zealous saint of God, has often endeavour'd it, and on this occasion has sent us (possibly) his last, most pressing and friendly direction. Here too I shall take the liberty to mention Mr. GILBERT TENNENT, tho' present; who has written more, and suffered more for his writings to promote peace and union, than any member of this divided church. None of all his useful writings

do him more honor than his **IRENICUM, or PEACE** OF JERUSALEM, which was treated with great indifference by one party, and with great contempt by the other. And both, instead of thanking the man that reach'd out a friendly hand to help us over our difficulties, were ready to worry and despise the peace-maker. And, in justice to all the other members of both synods, as far as I have the honor of their acquaintance, I must declare that they seem grieved for our divisions, and greatly concerned to restore peace; and 'tis well known, that some, in a particular manner, have esteem'd it a matter of the greatest importance, to the kingdom of CHRIST, and have exerted themselves with much candor and friendship, to the utmost of their power to attain what we so much need and long for.----O that GOD would direct and prosper their endeavours, and crown them with the blessings of the peace-makers, who are called the **CHILDREN OF GOD!**

UPON THE WHOLE then;----With whom shall we consult on this interesting occasion? Or whose advice shall we follow? Should we have recourse to some of the weakest christians, under their prejudices and mistakes; or should we give way to the pride and corruptions of our own hearts; or should we consult the worst of mankind; or obey the fallen angels; no doubt but they would all unite in sentiment, and cry out, that it is base, or dishonorable, or inexpedient and dangerous to unite in the bonds of peace: At least they would insist on terms that were impossible and

impracticable, abatements and stipulations only to gratify pride and ill-nature. But were we to be advised by the best men that are now alive in all the churches of GOD; or by our holy departed friends that are now "the spirits of just men made perfect;" if we listen to the apostles and prophets of JESUS CHRIST; or were the angels of GOD, those ministers of peace, who rejoice in the conversion of sinners, to persuade and advise us, or would we call to mind and obey the great command of our wise and gracious REDEEMER? Or, in one word, were we determin'd to pay obedience to our CREATOR and PRESERVER, the GOD of PEACE and LOVE, and LONG-SUFFERING, all, all with one united voice, would advise, and conjure us to put away anger, wrath and malice; and to keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, IN THE BOND OF PEACE; which that we may be all persuaded and enabled to do, my GOD grant for the sake of CHRIST JESUS our LORD.—Amen,

END of the FIRST SERMON,

SELF disclaimed and CHRIST exalted :

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT PHILADELPHA,

BEFORE

THE REVEREND SYNOD OF NEW-YORK,

MAY 25, 1758.

BY DAVID BOSTWICK, A. M.

Minister of the Presbyterian Church in New-York.

Published at the Request of the Members of the Synod.

JOHN iii. 30. HE must increase but I must decrease.

I THESS. ii. 4---6. We speak not as pleasing MEN but GOD, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness ; GOD is witness.----Nor of men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others.----

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed by W. DUNLAP. M,DCC,LVIII.

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 to the apostles and preachers of JESUS CHRIST; or
 were the angels of GOD, those ministers of peace,
 who reside in the communion of heaven, to persuade and
 advise us, or would we wish to stand and obey the great
 command of our wife and goddess, REDUCTION?
 Or, in our own hearts, would we wish to obey the voice
 of our FATHER and FATHERS, the GOD
 of PEACE and LOVE and LONG-SUFFERING,
 all, all with one united voice, would we wish
 to join in to put away anger, wrath and malice;
 and to keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT, IN
 THE BOND OF PEACE; which that we may be
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A

SERMON

PREACHED AT PHILADELPHIA

BEFORE

THE REVEREND SYNOD OF NEW-YORK,

MAY 25, 1778.

By DAVID BOSTWICK, A. M.

Minister of the Presbyterian Church in New-York.

Published at the Request of the Members of the Synod,

JOHN 11. 20. His mind increased but I must decrease.
1 THES. 4. 6. We speak not as pleasing MEN but
GOD, which trieth our hearts. For neither in any time
used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of cov-
tousness: GOD is witness:—For of men sought we glory,
neither of you, nor yet of others.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed by W. DUNLAP. M.DCC.LVIII.

P R E F A C E

CANDID READER,

THE dear and venerable LORD JESUS, is the foundation, the soul, and substance of true religion; the only medium of access for apostate transgressors to the eternal FATHER; the way, the truth, and the life: When he is rejected, all religious appearances are but a mere shadow, a dead carcass, an airy fabric: The grand peculiars of his (revealed) religion, whereby it is distinguished from natural, are his supreme godhead, his satisfaction to justice, the remission of sins by his mediatorial righteousness imputed, and the denial of ourselves; between which, there is a close connection, so that if one be denied, the rest are opposed and subverted; e. g. if his proper deity be contradicted, his satisfaction to justice for the sins of men, which are objectively infinite, cannot be consistently supported; and if that fails, the imputation of his righteousness is without foundation, for what is not, cannot be communicated: And thus the christians hope and joy are overthrown, and he is reduced to natural religion or paganism: The sinner stands upon his own bottom, and must answer for his

sins himself, a dreadful state indeed, considering the
 unstained purity and inflexible righteousness of the di-
 vine nature, and the infinite evil of sin, as it opposes
 all the perfections of the deity, and violates all the in-
 finite and endearing obligations, which intelligent be-
 ings are laid under to his homage and service, by rea-
 son of his transcendent eminence, and communicative
 goodness : As sin rejects the authority of God, and
 usurps his throne and dignity, so it casts an ungrate-
 ful slight on all the amazing condescensions of his
 grace and love ; hence its malignity and baseness must
 of consequence be infinite and inexpressible, and the
 proportional punishment due in justice for it, either
 infinite in weight, or eternal in duration ; the first, a
 creature not being able to sustain, the latter must
 without a mediator take place, so that what is want-
 ing in weight, may be made up in continuance ; for
 surely the judge of all the earth must needs do right ;
 but such a punishment would entirely and forever ruin
 the whole human race ; And indeed, no scheme, but
 that of a mediator's becoming surety for transgressions,
 and paying in their place the debts they owe, can se-
 cure the honor of God's law, the dignity of his
 truth, and the justice, and the glory of his govern-
 ment, and yet in the mean time open, in perfect con-
 sistency herewith, a way for the illustrious manifesta-
 tion, of the richest effusions of divine goodness and
 benignity, a plan for the penitent sinners pardon and
 salvation, so that God may be just, and yet the justifi-
 er of him that believes in Jesus. We must there-
 fore

fore have recourse to the great mediator, as our city of refuge, or be destroyed by the avenger of blood.

JUSTICE, being a natural and necessary perfection of the divine nature, hath of consequence an invariable respect to the moral qualities of intelligent agents. Now as divine GOODNESS, in some degree, naturally and necessarily diffuses itself on rational creatures, that are perfectly pure and innocent, so justice likewise terminates on the guilty, except a satisfaction intervenes. If it be impossible, considering the perfection of the DEITY, that holiness should be unrewarded, it must be likewise impossible that sin should pass unpunished, seeing the exercise of JUSTICE is more necessary than that of GOODNESS. For the rewards of the former, are pure favour, but of the latter, a due debt!

SIN being directly contrary to the divine purity, it will follow, that JEHOVAH must as necessarily hate it, as he loves himself; now, punishment is but a natural effect, and proper manifestation of this hatred, and of consequence no arbitrary constitution.

ALMIGHTY GOD, in the character of a supream governor, is obliged to protect the law of his government, from reproach and insult. As it was proper the reasonable creature should have a law to direct it, in that homage and service it had a capacity to perform to its creator and sovereign, so it was equally reasonable, that the said law should be supported

by

by such sanctions, as were necessary to procure the creatures obedience: Now, the law being broken, it is just and necessary that the threatned punishment be inflicted, either upon the transgressor himself, or upon such a surety in his place, as was able to make satisfaction equivalent to the offence, that so the majesty, purity, and righteousness of GOD, might be rendered conspicuous, as well as the value he put upon obedience to his law! Now, if the penalty threatned, be not inflicted upon a proper occasion, it reflects dishonour either upon his wisdom, as if he had not with good reason concerted the sanction, or upon his power, as if he was not able to inflict it, or upon his purity as tho' he connived with transgressors in their impieties, or upon his truth, inasmuch as on this hypothesis, his word is not performed; would not sinners be hereby induced to condemn the law and lawgiver, and encourage themselves in iniquity, if sin was passed by with impunity? Surely JEHOVAH's hatred against it would not be declared, nor the honour of his laws preserved, nor a suitable fear of offending him awakened, all which are excellent and necessary.

AND here I can't but observe, that the types, ceremonies, and sacrifices mentioned in the old testament, plainly point to a Mediator, and signify his substitution in the place of sinners, his suffering and satisfying for them, and their being freed on this account from the penal fruits of sin; this is the substance and scope of the old testament; and the substance of the new, consists in the account we have therein,

therein, of the fulfilment of the former in the person of CHRIST, the antitype, the fruits thereof, and duties consequent thereupon; thus it is evident, that JESUS CHRIST, is (if I may be indulged the humble phrase) the soul and substance, the cream, marrow and kernel of the scriptures; the foundation upon which the whole structure is built, and the grand center to which all the lines in their circumference directly tend, and in which they sweetly terminate! HE, HE, is the pearl of great price, hid in that sacred field, which whosoever finds, for joy sells all and buys it; and they that miss this, miss the great design of all revealed religion: Their christless, graceless piety, is but a dead carcass, without a soul to animate it, a selfish mean and ignoble husk,

AND, of this religion of JESUS, self-denial is a primary article, an initial duty, which supposes our deliberate, free and determinate choice of GOD in CHRIST, as our absolute and rightful LORD and GOVERNOR, our chief GOOD and last END, and implies the voluntary, habitual and resolute subordination of ourselves, and our all, (especially in what concerns the present life) to his being, honour, and authority, and the actual exercise of this subordination, as occasion requires, in renouncing and forsaking, without hesitation or reluctance, any thing, yea every thing that concerns our honour, ease, emolument, when, and as far as they stand in competition with the divine glory and pleasure, expressed by his precepts and providences: O! it is a great matter,

a rare attainment, to have a single eye to God's glory, in the general course of our practice; and to prosecute this, with uncorrupted simplicity, with an unshaken firmness, in the midst of all opposition, by an inviolate adherence, not to the unexamined customs of the present times, not to the opinions of good or bad men, implicitly, but to the law of God, as our infallible scale of sentiment and action, and that readily, from a principle of obedience to the authority of GOD, without consulting with flesh and blood! Such as have a single eye, are ISRAELITES indeed; their whole bodies are full of light; they are in a comfortable and safe state: But those that are squint eyed, are hypocrites, in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and may, so continuing, certainly expect to be cut assunder by the sword of divine justice!

THE contrary of self denial, viz. immoderate selfishness, as it is the most egregious, enormous, and blasphemous villainy! pregnant with numerous and crimson iniquities, and the fatal source of all that train of evils and calamities, that have inundate this lower world, and made it groan and travel, since the apostacy of our first parents, even 'till now; an evil that makes this dark globe a Bedlam, a Hospital, a Bochim, an Acaldama: An evil that tears in pieces all the sinews of society, all the strong and tender ties of nature, honour, justice, grace and gratitude! An evil which is the grand make-bait in the church and state; the sworn enemy to order and harmony, to peace

peace, unity, and love! But whither am I carried? I must stop my pen, I am only to write a preface, and not a volume: I intended but a few lines when I began, but I now feel my soul so fired with the beauty, the glory, and importance of the subject, that I have enough to do to restrain myself!

As CHRIST crucified, should be the principal subject of our discourses, so doubtless it is best in the general, to use a crucified stile, lest by painting the glass, we darken its light, and shoot above our hearers heads, instead of into their hearts; lest we rather please their fancies with subtle speculations, or with soft or sounding words of vanity, than instruct their minds, and alarm their consciences, by the plain and simple declarations of divine truth!

I rejoice, that the important and seasonable subject of preaching CHRIST, and not our selves, is so well handled in the following DISCOURSE. I heartily wish, and humbly pray, that the gracious JEHOVAH, would bless it, to the good of many, and that the worthy AUTHOR may be long continued, a burning and shining light in the church of God!

In fine, give me leave to add, to what has been before observed, concerning immoderate self-love, this one particular, viz. That when that malignant Monster is subdued, and reduced to the proper limits prescribed by reason and religion, the natural, unfeignable, unfriendly fierceness, and pharisaical severity

of.

of the soul; is softened into forbearance, gentleness, and forgiveness; softened into benignity, peace, and love! these truly noble, godlike, and venerable characters, so worthy of a human soul, so well adapted to promote the divine glory, and all the valuable ends of society, as well as our own personal quiet, comfort, and benefit! virtues which breathe the spirit and genius, and suit the grand scope of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; virtues enforced by the most positive and amiable precepts, and recommended by the most moving and illustrious examples; hence we are enjoined to put on bowels of mercy, kindness and humbleness of mind, in meekness and long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us; and to walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God. We are also commanded to pray for the peace of JERUSALEM, and to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; yea, as much as lyeth in us, if possible, to live peaceably with all men, and that because without peace and holiness, no man shall see the Lord: Is it consistent for us, my dear brethren! who have had ten thousand talents forgiven us, to take our brother by the throat for a few pence. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye may be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let nothing be done through strife or vain glory. but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others

others better than themselves; look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. In a word, SIRS, if the highest authority, and the most glorious examples of love set before us, by GOD the FATHER, and the SON, will not influence us to our duty, our interest, our glory, what else then can affect and persuade our stupid, foolish and froward souls? O! SIRS, should we not either love our poor brethren, with a pure heart, fervently; or disclaim all relation to the God of peace and love! I am, your willing and sincere servant, for CHRIST'S sake.

PHILADELPHIA,

Dec. 30th, 1758.

GILBERT TENNENT.

I am, your willing and obedient servant, for Christ's sake,

GALBERT, TERENCE

SELF disclaimed, and CHRIST exalted:

S E R M O N, &c.

2 COR. iv. 5. For we preach not ourselves, but
CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

WAS I to give a brief and summary description of man's original apostacy in few words, I would chuse to say, That it was a departing from GOD the author and fountain of blessedness, and retiring into himself as his last and ultimate end: And that the sum of his moral depravity consists in an habitual disposition to treat himself, in the same manner that he ought to treat the GOD of HEAVEN; i. e. to love himself supremely, and seek himself ultimately and finally, and set up himself in one shape or another, as the grand center to which all the lines of his busy thoughts, anxious cares, and subtle projects, bend and terminate.

WHILE he continued in his original state of moral rectitude, that GOD who was the author of his being, was his beginning and end, his interest and attractive,

his desire and delight, and in a word his ALL. But when sin took place in his heart, it warp'd the unhappy creature from his GOD to himself, inasmuch that SELF is now become ALL to corrupt and depraved nature, even as GOD was once ALL to nature uncorrupted and undepraved. Selfishness is therefore now become the most active and reigning principle in fallen nature, and, like the first wheel in a grand machine, sets the whole world in motion. For if we survey the conduct of busy mortals, in the various ranks and degrees, characters and circumstances of life, we shall easily perceive that SELF is the IDOL they are naturally disposed to worship, and SELFISHNESS the grand interest to which they are by nature intirely devoted.

W E find ourselves in the midst of an active busy world, the inhabitants of which are ever engaged in some vigorous pursuits. But what are they pursuing? What is the governing principle of their actions? And what the center to which they bend and terminate? Are they laboring for GOD as their ultimate end, or for THEMSELVES? When the merchant compasseth sea and land, in search of a worldly treasure, does he this for GOD, or for HIMSELF? When the soldier boldly enters the field of battle, faces death in its most hideous forms, and opens his bosom to the most pregnant dangers, does he this for the honor of GOD, or for the honor of HIMSELF? When the industrious tradesman rises early, and sits up late, and eats the bread of carefulness, and fills up his swift succeeding hours,

hours, with the most painful and assiduous labor, does he labor ultimately for GOD, or for HIMSELF? When men of superior rank, and greater affluence, devote their wasting moments to the fashionable diversions, and pleasurable entertainments of life, do they this to please and glorify GOD, or to please and gratify SELF? In a word, what is it in general that men live for, and what are they doing in the world? What are their thoughts spent, their words spoken, their hands employed, and their time improved for? Is it for GOD, or THEMSELVES? Alas, how easy it is to see the awful prevalence of this corrupt and accursed principle! That it is SELF that rules kingdoms, that governs families, drives on their trade, manages their worldly business; that CHUSES EVEN THEIR RELIGION, and influences their whole conduct; that lies at the root and bottom of all their actual sins, makes them ungodly, and keeps them ungodly, and is their very ungodliness itself.

AND, O! that it might be said, with undoubted truth, that notwithstanding the general prevalence of this detestable principle, among the various ranks and orders of men, that there is at least one ORDER exempted from the general charge; and that NONE who sustain the sacred character, are influenced by mercenary principles, or selfish motives; but that each individual could safely adopt the language of the apostle in behalf of himself and brethren; 'We preach NOT OURSELVES, but CHRIST JESUS the LORD.'

In the preceding chapter, the apostle had been magnifying his office, on account of the excellency and glory of that gospel, which was the subject of it: And in this he vindicates the ministry of the apostles and gospel ministers, from the unjust accusations of false and judaizing teachers, who had charged them with walking in craftiness, and handling the word of the LORD deceitfully(a). He avouches their sincerity, that they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; and as a proof of their integrity, he assures them, that their business was to preach CHRIST, and not themselves. "We preach not ourselves, says he, and therefore are not a set of designing men, as our accusers would insinuate. SELF is neither the MATTER, nor the END of our preaching; we neither teach our own notions, passions, or prejudices, for the word of GOD, nor do we seek ourselves, or the advancement of our secular interest and glory: But we preach CHRIST JESUS the LORD, and endeavour to make him known to the world, in each of these amiable characters, as the MESSIAH, the CHRIST of GOD, as JESUS, the saviour of men, and as LORD and king in his church; and to advance the interest of his glorious kingdom among men."

FROM these words, I shall attempt to shew;

I. WHAT that SELFISHNESS is, which the apostle here disclaims; or, when ministers may be said to preach themselves.

II.

II. I SHALL consider some of the operations of that SELFISH principle, in those particular instances, that tend to discover its reigning dominion. And then,

III. SHEW what it is to preach CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

AND lastly improve the whole.

Let us then enquire.

1st, WHAT that SELFISHNESS is, which the apostle here disclaims, &c. And to set this in a proper light, and prevent mistakes, I must observe negatively.

1st, 'Tis not that regular self-love that induces ministers to zeal and faithfulness, in the discharge of their sacred trust, from the consideration of future rewards and punishments. There is a self-love implanted in human nature, that is consistent with compleat rectitude, and therefore is not the effect of our moral depravity. This ADAM had in his state of perfect innocence, or else the promises of rewards would have been no inducement to obedience, nor would the severest threatnings have deterred him, in any measure, from disobedience. 'Tis not therefore a criminal selfishness, for ministers to have a suitable regard to their own future and everlasting interest, and to be influenced to diligence and industry, in their great important work, by motives drawn from those future and eternal realities. 'Twas doubtless agreeable to the GOD of HEAVEN, that EZEKIEL the prophet should be influenced to faithfulness, in giving warn-

ing, from that awful consideration, that the 'blood of those that perished, should otherwise be required at his hand(b).' And when the apostle urged TIMOTHY to 'take heed to himself and his doctrine, and continue in them;' he would have him influenced by these considerations, that he 'should save himself, and them that heard him(c).' Nor was even ST. PAUL intirely above the influence of this motive, when he gave this reason, why 'he kept his body under subjection; lest when he had preached to others, himself should be a cast-away(d).' It was not an unreasonable selfishness in the prophet ISAIAH, to take encouragement under all his complaints, and be animated in his work, from the consideration, that 'though ISRAEL was not gathered, yet he should be glorious in the eyes of the LORD(e).'

2dly, This disclaiming ourselves, does not imply a total disregard to our reputation and character among men, for on this, the success of our ministry, and consequently the advancement of the REDEEMER's kingdom, may, in some measure, depend. If the character of a gospel minister, is stained with false and ill-natured aspersions, this tends to mar his influence, and consequently his usefulness: It is therefore no ways inconsistent with a gospel-self-denial, to seek a vindication of himself, and his abused reputation. The apostle himself does so, in this and his other epistles; and says, no man shall stop him in this boasting(f). It ever becomes the ministers of CHRIST, to have a tender regard to their reputation and

b Ezek. iii. 17, 18. c 1 Tim. iv. 16. d 1 Cor. ix. 27.

e Isai. xlix. 5. f 2 Cor. xi. 10.

and character, as subservient to the great ends of their ministry, and in which the honor of CHRIST, and the interest of RELIGION, is nearly concerned. It becomes a bishop to be blameless, and an officer in the church of GOD, to be of good report(g); yea, and to maintain the authority of his sacred character, 'and let no man despise him(h)'. Indeed if our reputation among men of carnal corrupt minds, suffers for our faithfulness in the discharge of our sacred trust, and 'men speak all manner of evil against us falsely for Christ's sake(i). (which is not at all uncommon) in this case, our honor, interest, and reputation, and even life itself is to be given up, and made a willing sacrifice to the honor and interest of JESUS CHRIST; 'not counting our own life (much less our name and reputation) dear, that we may finish our course, and the ministry we have received of the LORD JESUS(k).

BUT, 2dly, and positively, The selfishness here disclaimed, is in general, that which stands in direct opposition to the honor of GOD, and the interest of JESUS CHRIST. That sets up SELF in the room and place of GOD, in our estimation, affections, intentions and pursuits; and disposes us to love and value ourselves, in the same manner we ought to love and value the God of Heaven, to prefer our honor to his honor, and our interest to the interest of JESUS CHRIST; and in a word, to regard ourselves supremely, and seek ourselves ultimately and finally, and to be influenced inordinately, in one shape or

K other,

g Tim. iii. 7. h Tit. ii. 15. i Mat. v. 11. k Act. xi. 24.

other, by mercenary views, and selfish motives, in all we do. It is, therefore, nothing less on the whole, than a direct contending with the GOD of HEAVEN, and maintaining a dispute with him, who shall be most loved and regarded by us, HE or WE, and whose honor and interest shall be primarily and ultimately pursued, HIS or OUR OWN.

BUT, more particularly, This selfishness in public preaching, may be considered both materially and formally, or as it respects the subject matter, and the formal manner, of our preaching.

1st, THEN ministers may be said to preach themselves, when the matter of their public preaching is such, that it tends rather to promote self-honor and self-interest, than the honor of GOD, and the interest of JESUS CHRIST. When the substance of their sermons, is only 'the enticing words of man's wisdom(1)', calculated rather to gratify men's curiosity with pleasing speculations, than to pierce their hearts with pungent convictions; and has a greater tendency to please their fancies, than to convert and save their souls. When in the matter of their preaching, they conform to men's vitiated taste, and corrupt humors, and rather soothe and flatter, than strive to awaken and alarm their consciences; endeavoring rather to win them to themselves, and gain them over to their own self-interest, than to win them to CHRIST, and convert them to GOD. In a word; we are aw-fully

fully guilty of this criminal selfishness, when our sermons have rather a tendency in their very matter and composition, to commend ourselves, than to commend the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and to beget in the corrupt hearts of our hearers, an esteem of our persons, gifts, and abilities; rather than of the person, glory, and offices of the great REDEEMER, the ever adorable GOD-MAN JESUS CHRIST.

2dly, This selfishness respects the form, as well as the matter of our preaching, i. e. the governing principle from which we act in our public ministry, and the ultimate end we have in view. And this is doubtless the principal thing here intended, for be the matter of our preaching ever so good, yet SELF may be the root and bottom of it all, and the object of our principal aim. Nothing is more evident, than that we may do the work of GOD, and that which is really so, as to the matter or thing done; and yet not do it for GOD, as to the formal manner, but rather for ourselves. Thus JEHU did the work of the LORD, when he executed the vengeance of JEHOVAH, on the house and family of wicked AHAB; and when he broke down the images of BAAL, and restored ISRAEL from idolatry; and yet he did it not FOR GOD, but FOR HIMSELF, as appears by his proud boast, 'come see my zeal for the LORD of HOSTS(m).

It is not at all inconsistent to say, that ministers may calculate their SERMONS, both as to MATTER,

K 2

METHOD,

METHOD, and manner of **DELIVERY**, so as to have an aptitude and tendency to answer the great ends of preaching, and yet may **PREACH THEMSELVES**, as to the **PRINCIPLE** from which they act, and the **ULTIMATE END** they have in view. Nor is it at all to be wondered at, if in a time when the most zealous, lively, and practical preaching, the most earnest addresses to the heart and conscience is in vogue, and tends most to recommend the preacher, and promote his reputation, that mere selfish principles, should induce men to attempt it, and even strive to excel in it. So that though we preach ever so well, as to the matter and method of our sermons, and with ever so much apparent zeal and fervor, in the delivery of them, yet if we fail as to the formal manner, and aim chiefly and ultimately at ourselves, our honor, interest and reputation, we are found guilty of that criminal **SELFISHNESS** which the apostle disclaims; and are making **IDOLS** of ourselves, by treating ourselves in the manner we ought to treat the **GREAT GOD** of heaven and earth. This is the **SELFISHNESS** **HERE DISCLAIMED**, and this it is, for men to **PREACH THEMSELVES**. I am

Idly, To consider some of the operations of this corrupt principle, in those particular instances that tend to discover its reigning dominion. In every unsanctified heart, **SELF** in one shape or another, is ever uppermost, and has an intire ascendancy, and governing influence, in every thing they do. When therefore, men of this character, take upon them the

office

office of the gospel-ministry, SELF must be their grand motive, and their principal inducement. For, though a faithful discharge of this important trust, requires more SELF-DENIAL, than any employment under the sun; yet there are many things in the sacred office, that may be alluring baits to men of corrupt and selfish minds. A tolerable maintenance, or comfortable subsistence in the world, may be an inducement to such as know not better how to provide for themselves: Who, like the unjust steward, are 'unwilling to dig, and ashamed to beg(n),' and therefore chuse this rather than a meaner employment. Thus in the degenerate times of the church of old, men would 'crouch for a piece of silver, and say, put me I pray thee into the priest's office that I may eat a piece of bread(o).' And hence that bitter complaint, that 'the priests taught for hire, and the prophets divined for money(p);' and on this account, they were called 'greedy dogs that could never have enough, and shepherds that did not understand, looking every one for his gain from his quarter(q).' Let none understand me, as though I insinuated, that ministers have not a right to insist on a sufficient maintenance, and an honorable support; for whatever a carnal selfish world may imagine, it will be found true at last, that GOD (and not man) 'hath ordained that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel(r).' Nor do I in the least doubt, but the too general neglect of this duty among people to their ministers,

n Luke xvi. 3. o I Sam. ii. 36. p Mic. iii. 11. q Isai. lvi. 11. r 1 Cor. ix. 14.

ministers, is one of the crying and God-provoking sins of the present day. (See Mal. iii. 8, 9, 10.) What I am proving is, that SELF in its reigning dominion, may influence men to undertake the sacred imployment, with such sordid views. And this is necessarily supposed, in the apostle's frequent exhortations to ministers, 'not to be greedy of filthy lucre(f), nor be given to filthy lucre(t), nor teach things for filthy lucre's sake(u). The inducement of the apostle himself (as of every other faithful minister) was vastly different. A NECESSITY, says he, 'is laid upon me, and wo is me if I preach not the gospel(w).' And he could say, with the utmost sincerity, to the CORINTHIAN church, 'I seek not yours, but you(x).'

AGAIN, A life of study, and an opportunity to furnish the mind with the various improvements of human science, may be an inducement to those who have a turn for speculation, and would be willing to shine and make some figure in literature, from mere selfish principles to undertake the ministry. And, WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT, SIR? The supposed ease and indolence of a minister's life, by those who know nothing of the many cares, fatigues and perplexities of it, may possibly induce a selfish man, who is willing to favor the flesh to enter upon it, Nor is it at all unlikely that the reverence and respect shewn to the sacred character among men, may influence

f 1 Tim. iii. 3. t Tit. i. 7. u Ver. xi. w 1 Cor. ix. 16.

x 2 Cor. xii. 14.

fluence those who are chiefly seeking themselves. 'Tis agreeable to a proud selfish mortal, to be looked upon and respected as the leader and guide of the people, and to have others dependent on him, and 'receive the law at his mouth(y).'

Now; when such alluring baits as these, are the principal inducements to the ministry, the reigning dominion of a selfish principle, is exceeding evident. And as these undertake the sacred imployment for THEMSELVES, and not for GOD, so they will ever 'preach themselves, and not CHRIST JESUS the LORD.' For the same principle, while uppermost in their hearts, will attend and govern them, in every branch of their ministerial conduct. It will go with them into their private studies, and there will chuse their subject, form and methodize their sermons, and often times make them more attentive to mere words and ornaments, than to the sacred truths of GOD. And hence, instead of plain and serious addresses, that might tend to MELT and CHANGE hard and unchanged HEARTS, they will abound with trifling speculations, set off with glittering toys, with figures of rhetoric, and arts of elocution. Or instead of instructing their people, in the great things that concern their everlasting welfare, they go beyond their capacity, and teach them nothing, but that they are able to speak unprofitably and unintelligibly. SELF will often dispose them to take off the edge, and dull the life of their teachings, under a pretence of filing off
y Mal. ii. 7.

off the roughness, and smothering the diction: And if a plain and cutting passage occurs, it will cast it away, as too rustical and ungrateful. Thus in their preparations for public service, instead of consulting seriously, "What shall I say, and how shall I say it, "so as best to please and glorify GOD, and do good "to the souls of men:" SELF will make them consult, "What shall I say, and how shall I deliver it, "so as to be thought an excellent preacher, and to "be admired and applauded by all that hear me."

AND, when SELF has done its work in their study, and made their sermon, it will attend them even to the pulpit, and there it will form their very countenance and gesture, and modulate their voice, and animate their delivery, and put the very accent and emphasis upon their words and syllables, that all may be calculated to PLEASE, rather than to PROFIT, and to recommend THEMSELVES, and secure a vain applause, rather than recommend JESUS CHRIST, and secure his interest in the hearts of men.

AND when the sermon is ended, SELF goes home with the preacher, and makes him much more solicitous to know whether he is admired and applauded; than whether he has prevailed for the awakening and conversion of souls. And so powerful is this principle in some, that they could even be glad in their heart (were it not for shame) to ask their hearers in direct terms, whether they like, admire, and applaud their labors, and conceive a good opinion of them.

But

But as this will not do, SELF will put them on some topic of conversation with their hearers, that will tend, if possible, to draw out their own commendation; and if they can perceive they are highly thought of, they rejoice greatly, as having attained their end: But if they find they are esteemed but weak, or at best, but common preachers, they are dejected and disappointed, as having missed what they think **THE GRAND PRIZE OF THE DAY**.

AND hence this false self-seeking heart, can be very easy and contented with a general approbation, and applause, without seeing any saving fruit of his labor, from year to year. Or if he desire success in the awakening and conversion of sinners, yet SELF may lie at the bottom of this too; and though it may work differently from the manner above described, yet it may terminate in the same thing in the final issue. SELF may make such as these, strive to excel in appearances of real godliness, and in zealous, fervent, practical preaching; yea, it may dispose them to desire success, to affect and change the hearts of their hearers, and they may calculate their discourses for that purpose, and yet aim ultimately at **THEMSELVES**, and the advancement of their own reputation. What can be more agreeable to a man who ultimately seeks himself, than to see people throng around him, and croud in multitudes to hear him, and appear to be affected with what they hear? And to find that he is able to command their attention, and move their passions and affections; and what

more pleasing, than to hear himself cried up by them, as the most able and godly preacher in the land, and fam'd through the whole country, as a man of the highest spiritual excellencies, and most successful labor.

I MEAN not to insinuate that men of such mercenary and corrupt principles, are like to be very successful, for though it is possible THEY MAY do GOOD, and GOD may bless what means he pleases; yet it seems MORE PROBABLE, that, as they labor not for GOD, but for THEMSELVES, he will leave them to THEMSELVES for the success: And that their labors will have no greater blessing, than THEMSELVES are able to give, and that their words, how pungent soever, will reach no farther than their own strength is able to make them. But what I have asserted, is, That SELF may make men desire SUCCESS, so far as it may tend to the advancement of their reputation. Again,

SOMETIMES this selfish disposition, will work up envious and bitter thoughts, against all those who they imagine stand in their light, or by out-shining them, eclipse their glory, and hinder the progress of their idolized reputation. Hence they are inwardly vexed and mortified, when a preference is given to the names and parts of their brethren, as if all the praise given to others, was injuriously taken from them, and that THEY THEMSELVES were not so particularly noticed, respected and esteemed, as their

partial

partial selfish judgment imagines they ought to be. And this often lays a foundation for jealousy, suspicion, and alienation, as if they were carrying on two different and contrary interests. It is this also, that makes some so tenacious of their own opinions, that they almost claim infallibility, and are ever impatient of contradiction or control. They esteem and value the man, that will say as they say, and be of their opinion, and promote their reputation; but he who will dare to differ from, or contradict them, is not to be borne with. O, SIRS! it is impossible to trace out all the corrupt workings of this detestable and pernicious principle, or to mention the innumerable mischiefs it has occasioned in the church of GOD. It was this that raised antichrist, by several gradual and progressive steps, to his present tyrannical dignity. It was this that enkindled the flames of persecution, in the several periods of the christian church, and stained the earth with the crimson gore of human blood; and it is this disturbs and rends christian societies, and divides them into different interests, and different parties, and fills them with bitterness against one another. O may the Lord in mercy deliver us from ourselves, as our worst enemy; and from the power and dominion of selfishness; as the forest plague that can befall us on this side hell!

BUT I have dwelt too long on this disagreeable subject, and shall therefore pass to the

THIRD GENERAL HEAD, Which was to shew, WHAT IT IS TO PREACH CHRIST. 'We preach not ourselves, but CHRIST JESUS the LORD.' And this also must be considered both MATERIALLY, and FORMALLY, or as it respects the SUBJECT MATTER, and the FORMAL MANNER of our preaching.

1st, As it respects the MATTER; it includes in general, the whole sum of gospel-doctrine, relating to man's salvation by JESUS CHRIST; the original contrivance, the meritorious impetration, and actual application of it, through his blood and spirit; the fall of man, 'by one man's disobedience (z),' and the guilt and ruin of a fallen state necessarily supposed; the original purposes of God's love and grace, that issued in the gift of his dear son, the glory of his person as GOD, the eternal relation he sustained to the father, his substitution as a surety, and designation to the office of mediator, his voluntary contract in the covenant of redemption, which made way for his mysterious incarnation; his holy life, his meritorious and cruel death, his powerful resurrection, triumphant ascension, and perpetual prevailing intercession; the compleat atonement he made, and the everlasting righteousness he hath brought in; together with the various offices he sustained, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation: The methods of divine operation, in the work of effectual calling, the nature and use of divine faith, to apply his blood and

z Rom. v. 19.

and righteousness; the blessings consequent on believing, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance in grace, and consummation in glory, perfection of holiness at death, and the compleat happiness of soul and body at the resurrection, in the full enjoyment of GOD to all eternity. These, and all other gospel-truths, suppoled by them, included in them, and consequent upon them, relating to JESUS CHRIST, are to be the SUBJECT MATTER of our preaching; all which are summarily comprehended, in the three characters mentioned in the Text, CHRIST JESUS THE LORD. CHRIST the MESSIAH, the anointed of GOD, qualified for, and set apart, to the office of mediator: JESUS the savior of men, who saves his people from their sins, both from the guilt and power, and finally from the punishment of them, by working out for them a righteousness to be imputed; and by working in them a righteousness implanted: THE LORD, the great head and king of his church, who has its government on his shoulders, and to whom all power is given in heaven and upon earth(a); to whom all homage and obedience are due, and to whom is committed, as a person every way qualified and worthy, the sole management of the solemn transactions of the grand and final JUDGMENT.

BUT particularly, 1st, TO PREACH CHRIST, is to hold him forth, not meerly as a LAW-GIVER, to be obeyed; but chiefly as a LAW-FULLILLER, to

to be believed in, for pardon, righteousness, and everlasting life. To represent him to poor perishing sinners, as a surety, who has undertaken in their room and stead, to pay the DEBT OF DUTY, and OF PENALTY, for which divine justice has them under an arrest; to atone for the crimes for which they are under sentence, and work out for them a complete and perfect righteousness, answerable to the strict demands of his unchangeable law. How honorably soever we may speak of JESUS CHRIST, as a ruler to be obeyed, and as a pattern to be imitated; yet if we do not exhibit him to view, as the great LAW-FULLFILLER, to be believed in, and as 'the end of the law for righteousness(b),' we do not properly PREACH CHRIST; but conceal a most essential branch of his meditorial excellency. It is the grand fundamental article of the religion of CHRIST, and the ground of all our hopes, 'that he suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God(c); that he not only died FOR OUR GOOD (as the SOCINIANS say, to set us an example how to suffer with patience;) but that he died 'in our room and stead,' and was 'made sin for us' by imputation, that we by imputation, 'might be made righteous in the sight of God through him(d).'

2dly, To PREACH CHRIST, is to exhibit to view his infinite divine FULLNESS, and the freeness of his unbounded GRACE, his almighty POWER to save, and his WILLINGNESS to exert that power; that

b Rom. xx. 4. c 1 Pet. iii. 18. d 2 Cor. v. ult.

that in him is to be found, all that righteousness that the law requires, and all that grace that the gospel promises; and in short, every thing that a poor, guilty, helpless, sin-burdened, and law-condemned sinner can possibly want; and that all the blessings of his atonement, are freely offered, 'without money, and without price(e),'

3dly, To PREACH CHRIST, is to make him the grand center of all the variety of subjects we enter upon, in the whole CERDENDA and AGENDA of religion. If we treat of the nature and perfections of the deity, we are to consider them, as displayed most eminently, 'in the face of JESUS CHRIST(f)'. If we exhibit to view the divine law, in its strictness and spirituality, we are to remember CHRIST, 'as the end of the law for righteousness(g)'. If we denounce its dreadful 'curse against every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them(h)'; 'tis that 'the law as a school-master, may bring them to CHRIST, that they may be justified by faith(i)'. If we treat of gospel-promises and gospel-blessings, we must consider them as purchased by the BLOOD, and distributed by the bounty and grace of CHRIST. If we discourse upon divine faith, CHRIST must be considered as 'the author and finisher,' as well as the 'direct object of it.' If we treat of repentance, 'tis 'CHRIST exalted at the right hand of GOD,' that must 'give it, and the remission

e Mat. iv. 1. f 2 Cor. iv. 6. g Rom. x. 4. h Gal. iii.

10, 24. i Heb. xii. 2.

remission of sins(k); and CHRIST crucified, and viewed by faith, that must be the first spring of it. If we treat of gospel-obedience, it must be considered as the genuine fruit of faith in CHRIST, and union to him; springing from 'constraining love(l) to,' and performed by strength and grace, derived from the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and accepted altogether, on account of the merit of his obedience and death. In a word, CHRIST must be considered, as 'all and in all(m),' as the 'ALPHA and OMEGA, the beginning and the end(n);' the fountain from which ALL is derived, and the center in which ALL must terminate; his righteousness is ALL in justification, his spirit and grace ALL in sanctification, and the enjoyment of him, ALL in glorification. This is to PREACH CHRIST, as to the MATTER of our preaching. And then,

2dly, As to the FORMAL MANNER, it implies, That we aim at the honor and glory of CHRIST, and the advancement of his interest, as our ultimate and final end. This is doubtless the principal thing intended, in opposition to those mercenary views, and selfish aims, that were mentioned before. Men may speak much about JESUS CHRIST in their sermons, and yet not properly PREACH CHRIST; yea, they may PREACH CHRIST too, as to the matter of their preaching, in all the instances above described, and yet not do it FOR CHRIST, but for THEMSELVES. And thus they may make CHRIST

himself, and the precious doctrines of the gospel, only subservient to the advancement of the grand IDOL, SELF. TO PREACH CHRIST then, is to make his honor and interest, the center of all our labor and industry; the mark on which we fix our eye, and towards which we endeavor to steer, in all our private studies, and public administrations, and in every instance of our ministerial conduct. Our business is to commend CHRIST, and not OURSELVES; to win the hearts of men to him, and not to ourselves; and attach them to his interest, rather than our own. And as this must be the ultimate proposed end, so those means must be chosen, that have the most natural tendency to accomplish it; even such methods and manner of address, as will tend to pierce the obdurate hearts, and wound the stupid consciences of sleepy secure sinners, by making them feel the ruin of their fallen state, their guilt and condemnation by the law, and the absolute impossibility of obtaining a personal legal righteousness: That they may effectually see their need of CHRIST, both as a surety to pay their law-debt, and as a fountain to wash in from sin and from uncleanness.

THE rich and unbounded treasures of gospel grace, are also to be laid open, and gospel invitations to be exhibited in their free and indefinite terms, urged with the most powerful motives, and persuasive arguments, that can be drawn from love, or from wrath, or from heaven, or from hell; and from all the glorious and dreadful things of an unseen eternal world.

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LET me now endeavor to IMPROVE this subject, by an inference or two, from each of the principal foregoing heads; and then conclude, with a particular APPLICATION. And,

1st, IF ministers are not to PREACH, or to seek THEMSELVES, in the execution of the sacred office; then none can ever discharge this important trust acceptably in the sight of GOD, who are under the reigning dominion of MERCENARY and SELFISH PRINCIPLES. I have observed before, that when man fell from GOD, by original apostacy, he retired as it were into HIMSELF, and is ever since disposed supremely to love, and ultimately to seek HIMSELF, as his last and final end. SELFISHNESS then, in one shape or another, is now the reigning, active principle in fallen nature, and has the intire dominion in every heart that is unrenewed and un sanctified; as therefore, un sanctified men, have no governing principle but SELF, and can act from no higher principles than they have; how can they be qualified for a faithful discharge of that work, which requires so much SELF-RENOUNCIATION. If such as these undertake the ministry, their views must be altogether SELFISH; they study, pray, and preach for THEMSELVES, and make THEMSELVES the grand center of all they think, and speak, and do: 'Seeking their own things, and not the things of CHRIST JESUS(o);' preferring their honor to his honor, and their interest to his interest; and therefore, they are guilty

guilty of idolatry, by setting themselves uppermost in their estimation, affections, designs, and pursuits. And if I should grant, that such as these, may be useful in the ministry, yet surely the undertaking will be awfully hazardous to the SOULS committed to their charge, and the consequence extreamly dreadful to themselves, for 'when they have preached to others, themselves will be finally rejected and cast away(p).'

adly, If the business of gospel-ministers is, TO PREACH CHRIST, hence see the honor and dignity of their office. No other than a glorious CHRIST, the anointed of GOD, the darling of heaven, and the beloved of angels and saints, is the subject of their ministry; from him their authority and commission is derived, in his valuable interest they are engaged to speak, as 'embassadors in his name and stead.' Their office is therefore honorable, in some proportion to the dignity of the sovereign, from whom they receive commission; the grandeur of the court, in whose interest they are employed as EMBASSADORS, and the important errand they have to transact with guilty men. And as they are engaged for CHRIST, and imployed by him to act as EMBASSADORS IN HIS NAME, he has declared that he will regard the treatment they meet with as if done to himself: 'He that receiveth you, says he, receiveth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and him that sent me(q).'

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p 1 Cor. ix. 27. q Luke x. 16.

a part for OURSELVES, and speaking in our own name, and driving on our own self-interests, men might treat us as they pleased : But if we act as ambassadors for CHRIST, in pursuit of his interest, and in his name and stead, let them take heed how they despise the SACRED CHARACTER we sustain, or neglect the SOLEMN MESSAGES we bring. But I must not dwell on these inferences, the time being far elapsed.

PERMIT me, therefore, now, with all humility, to address myself particularly to the venerable members of this SYNOD, with all others of the sacred character here present.

My reverend FATHERS, and dear BRETHREN!

THE SUBJECT I have now been handling, will necessarily lead me to great freedom, and plainness of speech; yet I will not entertain so dishonorable a thought of any of you, as to imagine an apology necessary : Nor will I doubt your candid acceptance of what shall now be said, though by one of the meanest of the sacred character, who would gladly sit at your feet and learn, and who is willing to stand corrected and reproved by you.

LET what we have heard, in the first place, lead us into our own hearts, to examine in the presence of an all-seeing GOD, whether we have not too much of this abominable selfish principle still lurking within us, and too little singleness of heart for GOD, and

and JESUS CHRIST, Do we never shrink into diffidence and neglect, in cases of duty, through the power and prevalence of that soothing temptation; SPARE THYSELF? Do we never find this detestable enemy, strive to encroach on the rights of the god-head, and assume the honor and regard that is due to JESUS alone. Does it never creep into our studies, and seek to have a hand in our preparations for the sanctuary of the LORD, and dispose us to consult how to PLEASE, rather than how to PROFIT; and how our own interest may be secured in the esteem and affections of our hearers, rather than how the INTEREST and KINGDOM of CHRIST may be advanced? And when we enter the sacred desk, with a message from heaven to guilty men, are we never too thoughtful of the notices and observations of our poor fellow mortals round about us, and too little sensible of the all-seeing eye of JEHOVAH upon us, and the vast and inexpressible weight of the errand on which we come? Are we never too solicitous about meer external appearances that attend our delivery, and too little so, about the spiritual frame of our hearts, in the sight of GOD? Are we never tempted by this pernicious principle, to play the hypocrite before our hearers, with a greater shew of zeal and fervor, and devotion, than is answerable to the inward state and frame of our minds? If at any time we find ourselves dead and barren, and have but little clearness or freedom, we are dejected; our hearts are depressed and sunk within us; but from whence is this dejection? Is it because we have done
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so POORLY for GOD, and been so MISERABLY DEFICIENT in his service? Or only because we have made so INDIFFERENT A FIGURE in the eyes of our fellow-men? On the other hand, when we find some enlargement and freedom, a readiness of thought, and fluency of expression, and feel some suitable degree of zeal and fervor, does a selfish, deceitful heart, never prompt us to a sort of SELF-COMPACENCY, and delight in OURSELVES? And if we are pleased, that GOD has enabled us, in any measure, to be FAITHFUL, yet, are we never too much elated with the approbation and applause of our poor fellow-mortals?

AND when our public performances are ended, what is the object of our greatest sollicitude? Whether sinners are awakened and won to CHRIST? Or, whether we ourselves are held in high esteem? Whether the word preached has gained their hearts for God, or whether it has gained for us their pleasing approbation? And does this selfish principle, never direct or influence our conduct, among the people of our charge? Are we not often best pleased with the company and society of those, who (perhaps too partial in our favor) may gratify our vanity with their professions and tokens of esteem and friendship? And do we not, from the same principle, shun or too much neglect, those who appear less friendly, though they need our instruction and advice, as much as others. Do not we too much neglect the duties of private, and particular applications, for fear of offending;

offending, and yet frame excuses for our neglects, that have too much SELFISHNESS in them? In a word, what did we undertake the ministry for? What do we study, preach and pray, live and labor for? Is it ultimately for GOD, or for OURSELVES? I beseech you, REVEREND AND DEAR SIRs, bear with this plainness and freedom, and let me not be looked upon in the light of an arrogant accuser; far be it from me, to lay any of these things to your charge, or to harbor a doubt of your disinterested zeal for GOD, and victory over SELF. 'There is but one heart among us, that I have reason to suspect,' and over THAT, I find it necessary to keep a continual watch and guard; And, O! how many are the secret windings and turnings, and different shapes and appearances, of this pernicious adversary SELF! How often does it beset us, when and where we have little expected it, and give us occasion to lament and say, 'Hast thou found me, O! mine enemy?' If we find then, on the above-mentioned enquiry, that our self-denial, and deadness to ourselves, is yet very imperfect. Let us in the

SECOND place, 'Bitterly bewail it before GOD, with the deepest humiliation.' For what can be more detestable, or carry a greater malignity in its very nature, than that disposition that would exalt SELF, in the place of GOD and JESUS CHRIST, and as it were contend with him for the preference, and dispute the point with him, who shall be most loved and regarded by us, HE or WE, and whose ho-

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nor and interest shall be primarily pursued, HIS or OUR OWN? And how inconsistent is this SELFISHNESS, with that lesson of SELF-DENIAL, that we are obliged to preach to others, and which JESUS has taught us, both by precept and example: Nay, with what face can we recommend SELF-DENIAL to others, while WE are SELFISH, or how can we reprove or condemn the sin in others, that we harbor too much in ourselves. We tell the drunkard, the swearer, the profane sinner, that 'except he be converted and changed, he cannot be saved;' and is it not as true of us, that we 'cannot be the true disciples,' or faithful ministers 'of CHRIST, except we deny ourselves.' Does not our LORD himself, lay this down as the grand CRITERION, by which he submits his own doctrine and mission to trial, whether it was of GOD, or whether he spake OF HIMSELF. 'He that speaketh of himself, says he, seeketh his own glory: But he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true(r).' I make no doubt, SIRs, but SELFISHNESS, in its reigning dominion, is a greater sin than drunkenness, or whoredom. The one dishonors GOD, by breaking his law; but the other strikes at the very relation of SOVEREIGN and SUBJECT, and contends with him, as it were, for the rights of god-head, and insists upon being above him, in the estimation, affections, intentions, and pursuits. Now, 'It is one thing to break some particular laws of a PRINCE, and another to set up to be above him, or to exalt a RIVAL,

r John vii, 17, 18.

RIVAL, in his room and stead; the first indeed is transgression, but the other is downright treason and rebellion, and therefore the most heinous! And indeed whatever we do in religion, and how good soever it be, as to the MATTER, or thing done; yet if SELF is the reigning principle, it tarnishes, corrupts, and debases all. And as it is the very essence of holiness to live to GOD, and act intirely for him; so it is horrible wickedness, in the very nature of it, to live to OURSELVES, and act ultimately for ourselves. If, therefore, we find the remains, or secret workings of so corrupt and detestable a principle, let us mourn and be humbled before GOD, and repair by FAITH to him, who once died. That they which live, should not live to themselves; but to him who died for them, and rose again (f).

3dly. Let us ever be watchful against this enemy of GOD, and our souls, and endeavor to suppress the first risings of it. Let us ever remember, we are not our own(t), and therefore have no business to live to ourselves, or regard our interest or reputation, any further than the honor of CHRIST, and the interest of religion is concerned. If GOD has made us, if CHRIST has redeemed us, if in our ordination yows, we have solemnly given up ourselves, and our all to him, then certainly WE ARE NOT OUR OWN; and therefore, to appropriate our time and talents to our own interest and reputation, is a sacrilegious ROBBING OF GOD!

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FURTHER,

FURTHER, Let us guard against that fear of man, that SELFISHNESS would prompt us to, and which would make us too fond to please, and too fearful to displease; for if we thus seek to please men, and by that means to advance ourselves, we cannot be the faithful 'servants of JESUS CHRIST(u).' And yet, such are the perverse tempers of many we have to deal with, that we are often reduced to an unhappy DILEMMA, and must either offend GOD, or offend them. Poor guilty mortals love to be soothed and flattered, but do not love to be plainly dealt with; hence, such pointed addresses, as tend to discover them to themselves, often excite their resentment. Thus, when our LORD was representing to his hearers, by several parables, the awful destruction that would shortly come upon the final rejecters of the gospel saviour, and the gospel salvation, it is said, 'The Chief-priests and Pharisees perceived that he spake of them(w).' (A heinous business indeed!) as if it was intolerable insolence for him to speak of them. It is true, they perceived right, he did speak of them, and all others like them; and what then? Why, they are exasperated, and would have laid hands on him, and treated him in a manner they thought he deserved, had it not been that they feared the multitude. And when this is the case, that we must either offend GOD, or men, whose displeasure shall we most regard? If carnal SELF is consulted, it will influence us to displease GOD, and to sooth and flatter our fellow-men. But alas!

u Gal. i. 10. w Matt. xxi. 45, 46.

should we make such an awful sacrifice to their corrupt humors, will they undertake to answer it for us? Will they defend us from the displeasure of **JEHOVAH**, when he shall send for us by death, or sentence us to hell by his righteous judgment? No, they dare not attempt this, nor dare we trust them in this matter. We have one **GOD**, and one master to please, and he must be obeyed, whether men like or dislike. Our errand to them, is on matter of life and death, the vast importance of which, must engage all the powers of our souls. Poor christless sinners, are not in a state to be soothed and flattered, or jested and trifled with; heaven and hell are not matters to be talked of in a careless, indolent strain; it is plain dealing such want, whether they like or dislike; such as will tend to make them feel their wretched, miserable state, and awaken their solicitude for deliverance.

AGAIN, our business is to **PREACH CHRIST JESUS** the **LORD**, and exhibit him to view in his personal glory and divine fulness as the law-fulfiller and saviour of sinners; to urge them compassionately to come to him that they might have life, and on their final refusal, to denounce against them the terrors of eternal death. And besides the inexpressible importance of these things, every consideration from the present providences of **GOD**, suggests an awakening call to the utmost diligence and painful industry. The **GOD** of **HEAVEN** is now thundering an alarm on every side, our country is groaning under ravages and devastations,

ons, and all the frightful calamities of WAR and BLOOD! The enemies of ZION are forming a confederacy and saying, 'Let us rase it, let us rase it to the foundation(x).' And who can tell how soon our churches may be demolish'd and beaten into rubbish, and we ourselves called to prison and to death. And what, (IN THE NAME OF GOD) shall we do in a day of suffering, if we have not learn'd to DENY OURSELVES, and account our honor, interest, and even life itself nothing in comparison of the interest and kingdom of JESUS CHRIST? Or should God in mercy yet spare his church, from the ravages of popish and pagan adversaries, yet as to us, we know our time is short, and the night of death will soon come when no man can work(y). We live in a DYING WORLD, and dwell in regions of mortality, and have lately had frequent and awful notices of the uncertain PENURE of humane life,

THE last year in particular with respect to ministers, may very properly be called the DYING-YEAR, in which the GOD of HEAVEN has smitten his church in these parts, with repeated strokes of sore bereavment in a close and awful succession! Scarce had we time to dry our weeping eyes for the loss of ONE, of eminent character and usefulness(z), but the streams of grief were called to flow down afresh for the loss of ANOTHER(a), whose zeal for GOD, and the conversion

x Psalm cxxxvii, 7.

y John ix, 4.

z The Rev. Mr. AARON BURR, President of the College,
a The Rev. Mr. JAMES DAVENPORT, Minister at Hope-
well, both of New-Jersey.

version of souls, was scarce to be parallel'd. And yet for all this, the anger of JEHOVAH was not turned away, but his hand was soon lifted up again, and with a dreadful aim, and resistless stroke, has brought down to the dust, perhaps the greatest pillar in this part of ZION'S BUILDINGS(b). O how does the whole fabric shake and totter! and what a gloomy aspect do these providences wear? as if GOD by calling home his EMBASSADORS, was about to quit the affair of NEGOTIATING peace with mankind any more.

Shall not WE then, who survive double and redoubtable our diligence, knowing our time is short, and that in proportion to the decrease of laborers, the work increases upon our hands. O SIRs! are heaven and hell glorious and dreadful realities? are sinners despising

The Rev. JONATHAN EDWARDS, President of the College of New-Jersey, of whom The Rev. G. TENNENT of Philadelphia, writes thus.---

PHILADELPHIA, March 28, 1758.

On wednesday the 22d instant, departed this life, the reverend and worthy Mr. JONATHAN EDWARDS, (formerly of Northampton, in New-England, but lately of Stockbridge) president of the COLLEGE of New-Jersey; a person of great eminence, both in respect of capacity, learning, piety, and usefulness; a good scholar, and a great divine. As his genius was extraordinary, so it was greatly improved by long and hard study, by which he treasured up much useful knowledge, both divine and human, and was thus uncommonly prepared for the arduous and important province to which he was called! Divinity was his favorite study, in the knowledge of which, he had but few, if any equals, and no superior in these provinces. The humility, gravity, and modesty of his behavior, rendered him amiable to all that feared GOD, who had the pleasure and privilege of his acquaintance! But nothing appeared with greater lustre, and more striking charms in his conduct, than his candor to man, and

ing the ONE and sleeping over the mouth of the OTHER, and are we sent from God to awaken them and shew them their danger ; sent to offer them a favour and invite them to fly from the wrath to come to his atoning blood, why then, O why don't these important realities swallow up our whole attention ? Why don't we make more haste, in plucking sinners as brands from EVERLASTING BURNINGS ! Why don't we pray more fervently, and preach more zealously, and lay out our whole life, and soul, and strength in this great work ? What ? is the interest and happiness of deathless immortal souls worth no more pains ? Can we do no more for the honor and interest of our glorious

and his fidelity to his GOD ! Virtues very rare in this degenerate age, wherein piety, integrity, and bravery, are ready to breathe their last ; an age, wherein, ' All flesh have corrupted their way,' and there is none (or almost none) upright among men. This MAN OF GOD, was favored with an unshaken firmness in the cause of his great master, nor would his noble soul stoop to vulgar prejudices, or meanly blend with the crowd. His judicious and magnanimous defence of the principles of the christian reformed religion, against the plausible prettexts and cavils of ARMINIANS, in a late volumin upon the liberty of the human will ; (a volumin, in which their cause is with great force of argument entirely baffled ; it is thought by some professors of divinity in Europe, and by divers divines here, that it exceeds any thing that has been wrote on the subject) and his excellent writings in behalf of the power of piety (which some time since happily spread in this sinful land) deserve esteem, and make his memory blossom in the dust. Others of his writings, likewise deserve to be mentioned with honor ; it is a comfort to us, in the midst of grief, that this ascending ELIJAH, has left behind him, the mantle of so many valuable volums, by which, though dead, he speaks with wisdom and warmth, in favor of truth and holiness ; he tells, though without design, he has erected to his memory a hut, not only preferable to fulsome funeral panegyrics, but even to the most durable monumental marble.

glorious MASTER than this comes to ? Shall the men of this world be more painful and industrious, in seeking THEMSELVES, than we in seeking the glory of CHRIST, and the salvation of souls ? GOD FORBID ! We are on matters of life and death, we pray, and preach, and labor for eternity ; sure it becomes us then, to do it with all our might. Shall we not be SOLEMN and SERIOUS, when so near that state and place where all are serious. BELIEVE IT SIRS, there is no trifling in the eternal world, there are none in jest either in heaven or hell. GOD FORBID THEN ! that we should jest and trifle with immortal souls, that are just at the door and upon the borders of an eternal state !

BUT I have too long intruded on your patience, and therefore will now conclude with an address to this assembly.

Mr

As this wise and faithful servant of CHRIST, glorified his blessed master, with uprightness and intrepidity of heart, by a conversation becoming his gospel ; so it pleased GOD to put great honor upon him, living and dying, by crowning his honest and unwearied labors with surprizing successes, in the conversion of many, and giving him great calm in his soul, at the time of his exit. When eternity drew near, he with undisturbed composure, desired his daughter to request her mother, and his wife, not to indulge excessive grief, on occasion of his departure from her, but to consider that the spiritual relation between them, would not be dissolved by death, and that he hoped to see her again ; and likewise that she should tell the other children, that he requested them to observe the instructions he had from time to time given them, and that if they did so, ' good would come to them.' After he had spoken to the above purpose, he looked about, and said, now, ' Where is JESUS of NAZARETH, my true and never failing friend ?' and so he fell asleep, and went to that

LORD

MY BRETHREN, if the reigning dominion of SELFISHNESS is inconsistent with a ministerial, 'tis equally inconsistent with a truly christian character. Hence says our LORD, if any man will come after me let him deny himself c). That man of whatever character, who loves himself supremely, and seeks himself ultimately and finally, and so places SELF in the room of GOD, in his estimation, affections and intention, falls upon a direct method to lose HIMSELF, and GOD, and HIS SALVATION too in the FINAL ISSUE. Did he hate his best interest as bad as the devil hates him, and deliberately consult how he might do himself the greatest mischief, and act the part of the most deadly enemy to his soul and body, he could not fall upon a more effectual method. For what can be more insolent or more provoking to the dread majesty of heaven, than for a poor grow-
ing

LORD he loved, (Sic mihi continget vivere, sicque mori) and left a bereaved society to sit in the dust, and mourn the unspeakable, (yea in some respects) the irreparable loss, of so wise, experienced, and faithful a head; and that in a time of great necessity, general calamity, great and growing danger to the church and state: O! when a holy GOD takes away such righteous persons, such invaluable jewels, in thick succession from our guilty land and nation, to his own bosom, his own cabinet; and that in the beginning of a dark gathering tempest, big with the fate of nations, is it not an awful omen? And should we not lay it to heart, before it be too late? May we not, with some variation, lament the death of this excellent man, in the language of DAVID, over SAUL and JONATHAN, O PRINCE-TOWN, the Beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places? Or over brave AENER, 'Know ye not that a great man is fallen this day in Israel?' Or in the pensive strains of ELISHA, over a departed ELIJAH, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horse-men thereof.'

ing heap of dust, to claim a preference to him, and challenge more love and regard than he, and live to himself, and prefer his own honor and interest to the honor and interest of him that made him: Nay, to insist upon being his own LORD and MASTER, and having his own will, whatever becomes of GOD's WILL. If such as these are ever happy, they must be able to make themselves so, not only without GOD, but even in despite of GOD, and in direct opposition to him. But alas! can poor mortals be sufficient for their own happiness without GOD, who can't support their existence a single moment, but must soon be carried on men's shoulders to the dark confinement of the grave, and there turn to ROTTENNESS and DUST, and will not be able with all their boasted sufficiency, so much as to lift a finger to remove the worms that will crawl about their Hearts, and prey upon their vitals? Can they make themselves happy in despite of GOD, and carry through that SELF-INTEREST which they have set up in opposition to him? Why then, they must conquer omnipotence, and do what neither angels or devils dare attempt! Let such vain mortals try their skill first, let them command yonder sun and moon to stand still, and invert the order of nature, let them change the seasons, and bring snow in harvest, and cause the flowers to spring in winter, and if they find the inanimate creation will obey them contrary to the law of their CREATOR, then, but never, never till then, let them proceed with confidence and courage to set up themselves as their LAST END, or live to themselves as their ULTIMATE FELICITY.

It was the grand design of the death and sufferings of JESUS CHRIST, to recover men from the ruins of their first apostacy, and consequently to save them from themselves, and the dominion of a SELFISH disposition. Hence says the APOSTLE, he died for us that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again(d). Rest not then I beseech you, till you have a special interest in the blessings of his atonement by divine faith, and the sensible experience of the efficacy of his DEATH and SUFFERING, recovering you from YOURSELVES, YOUR SELF-LOVE, SELF-SEEKING, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SELF-DEPENDENCE, to the supream love of GOD, and a fiducial dependence on the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

AGAIN, if our business as ministers is to PREACH CHRIST JESUS the LORD, then 'tis your business to receive him into your hearts by faith: And on this depends your everlasting weal or wo, for to as many as receive him gives he power to become the sons of GOD(e); but he that rejecteth him, hath one that will judge him at the last day(f). You see SIRS, that we are not to preach ourselves, nor aim to recommend ourselves to popular esteem. The question is not what you think of us, or of our gifts or graces, abilities or public performances; or whether you like or dislike, admire or despise: Think of us as you please so you do not despise and dishonor our glorious matter;

d 2 Cor. v, 15. e John i, 12. f John xii, 48.

ter : But the question is what you think of CHRIST ! who is the grand sum of our message, and whether you cordially receive him into your hearts by faith. If we may be so happy as to join you effectually to CHRIST, we are not so much concerned, whether we win your applause, or gain you over to any interest or party of our own. On the other hand, should you receive and treat us ever so kindly, and give our labors your highest approbation, yet if you don't receive CHRIST, the grand sum of all the messages we bring, the great end we have in view is lost, our labor is lost, your precious souls are eternally lost, and you had better never have been born. O SINNERS ! here you are tottering as it were on the brink of BURNING TOPHET, nodding on the very edge of the TREMENDOUS PRECIPICE, just launching into the ETERNAL WORLD, just about to appear at the BAR OF GOD, life is wasting, death is approaching, heaven and hell are glorious and dreadful realities, and a soul once lost, is irrecoverably lost, and the loss can never, never be retrieved. For the love of GOD then, in the name and bowels of JESUS, and by all the bitter agonies, and unparallel'd sufferings of a bleeding, dying SAVIOUR, we beg, intreat, and beseech you, now, EVEN NOW, to awake and fly from the wrath to come, and receive CHRIST who is the sum of our message, as ever you would have him receive your trembling departing souls in a dying hour. Take him who is now tendered to you as GOD offers him, to be the LORD your RIGHTEOUSNESS, and the LORD your RULER ; to be your PRINCE as well as SAVIOUR ; to give you repentance as well as remission

mission of sins(g), and you shall be washed and sanctified as well as justified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the spirit of the living GOD(h).

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